

Henry Holman
L E T T E R S

FROM THE

MARCHIONESS

D E S É V I G N É,

TO HER DAUGHTER

T H E

Countess DE GRIGNAN.

Translated from the FRENCH of the last PARIS
E D I T I O N.

VOLUME the EIGHTH.

She strikes each point with native force of mind,
While puzzled learning blunders far behind.
Graceful to fight, and elegant to thought,
The great are vanquish'd, and the wise are taught.
Her breeding finish'd, and her temper sweet;
When serious, easy; and when gay, discreet;
In glitt'ring scenes o'er her own heart severe,
In crowds collected, and in courts sincere. YOUNG.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. COOTE, at the King's Arms, in
Paternoster Row. M. DCC. LXV.

L E T T E R S

FROM THE

M A R C H I O N E S S

D E S E V I G N E

T O H E R D A U G H T E R

T H E

C O U N C E L L O R D E G R I S O N A M

Translated from the French of the late M. de la Harpe.



V O L U M E E I G H T H

See likewise each page with notes of the
White powder, bearing witness to the
Circumstances of the case, and the
The great and various, and the
Her mother's hand, and her
When the case, and the
In the long course of the
It is now collected, and is
Yours,

XXXXXX

L O N D O N

Printed for J. Cootes, at the King's Arms, in
Paternoster Row. M. DCCLXXV.



LETTERS

OF THE

MARCHIONESS

DE SÉVIGNÉ.



LETTER DL.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 4 Sept. 1680.



ETHINKS you seem to envy me the happiness of having seen all the family of your father Descartes at Rennes. It is beyond doubt, that you are more worthy that pleasure than myself: however, had they taken me

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B

for

for a person capable of understanding their philosophy, I should certainly have replied to them, *There is neither taste, sound, nor light*; but, as I could not answer them in prose, I did not dare venture to attack them by your poetry, which I repeated to the Abbé de Bruc at Nantes, who was quite charmed with it, and insisted upon my giving him it in writing. There was a niece of the family at Rennes, whom a certain person would have been glad to have persuaded, that she was a moiety of a whole, of which they did not think themselves the least part. Corbinelli would have been in love with all this, and with the jesuit likewise*. I have already told you all these trifles, as also those of our Rocks, as you sometimes tell me your's; and indeed, what should we have to tell each other, if it was not for such trifles? It is certain that these are trifles, and *trifles*; and that your's are much better than mine.

I never dreamt that the poor old Bishop of Evreux had died of a broken neck; I always thought it had been of extreme old age. We may say with regard to him, as the poet says of the father of Rodriguez,

——— *To have stopp'd his course
Was but like hast'ning th'uplifted blow
Of fate a few poor moments sooner;*

And yet these few poor moments have just saved the Chevalier from being buried; this is the first legacy he ever received, and the only death that he ever got any thing by. The King makes ill fortune fly before the lustre of

* See letter 14 Aug. vol. vii.

his generosity wherever he comes; the planets in presence of this sun all put on a benign aspect. See! I am turned poet, child! this is a downright rhapsody! But to return, let us acknowledge, in simple prose, that your brothers are very happily provided for till something better turns up.

We have at length got the better of our good Abbé's disorder, and not without many thanks for your kind care upon his account, which I assure you I place in great part to my own. Not to disguise the matter, your brother is very far from being well; it is happy for him that he can be at his ease here; I believe he is convinced that he has no cause to complain of me, and I must confess, that, notwithstanding the many little scoldings his extravagancies have drawn from me, I am heartily glad that I can be of any service to him in his present odd circumstances. In my conscience, he had better have been a *fricassée of snow* * than to have been tossed up in the high sauce he now is. I am only afraid that you will not find the affair so very extraordinary as it really is; but take this with you, that the beloved, or the hated person rather, who is the cause of all this, appears no more concerned at it than if it was a simple running of the nose. I think such a proceeding deserves to be severely punished; and I am astonished, that Mr. de la Reinie †, who is so excellent a civil magistrate, has not made some provision against crimes of this kind.

* Ninon l'Enclos used to say of Mr. de Sévigné, that he was a very *fricassée of snow*.

† Lieutenant General of Police.

I hope, my dear, you will take the very first opportunity to acquaint me when you perceive any change likely to happen in the present situation of your affairs; I am sensible it is not the case now, but you know it may be the work of an instant. I am sure, my dear Countess, that you are persuaded, I wish as much as you can possibly do to see and embrace you once more; and, if we cannot fall upon a method to annihilate the distance that separates us, we must e'en follow the footsteps of our forefathers, and each make every possible advance in our power towards a nearer contact; I am sure it will be the most agreeable task I can propose to myself. Use your endeavours to reconcile me with Mr. de Grignan. If he would cover me with confusion, he has nothing more to do than to be in full health. We think and talk of him every day in our Mall; and often say, how dexterously he would traverse it in two strokes and an half. I beseech my dear little Marquis not to neglect that game, nor any other means that can tend to render him pleasing; he cannot be too much so; embrace him then for me, and my sweet Paulina also; neither forget my compliments to the young Ladies Mr. de Grignan's sisters: but all this while I say nothing to you, my dearest life; however, let me desire you to say to yourself on my part whatever can be most tender and affectionate.

* *Monsieur* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I am very desirous to say something to you that may tally with the stile of this letter; but that is impossible for several reasons: besides, I am in a devilish ill humour; the cause my mother

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. 5

ther has glanced at in her's. I see no body can do me justice for the villainous usage I have received, unless it be Mr. de la Reinie. Had I been in any manner the occasion of it myself, I should have laid the blame at my own door; but who would imagine that a person, one saw sitting in presence of the queen as one of her companions, could ever treat a man as she has treated me? and that she should propose such a ridiculous method of cure as she has done? I imagined that my dislike to her person, added to the natural frigidity of my temperament, would have been my safeguard, but unhappily I was too good-natured, and I have taken a most cruel way to give the lie to the disgraceful reports that were spread concerning me: you must acknowledge, my dear sister, that this is a very curious account to entertain you with; but what touches me most sensibly, will always be uppermost. I will not embrace you; no, not even kiss your hand; it is not that perhaps I am not perfect'y well, but that perhaps I may be terribly out of order. This is a very mortifying alternative; the *perhaps*, however, is genteel, as a friend of our's said.

I am Mr. de Grignan's most obedient humble servant.

*Yes, brother, I am a wretch, a vile sinner,
Unworthy all regard, a mere sink of iniquity (y).*

* Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ.

What can one answer to so honest a confession? Indeed, I am terribly frightened at

* See act III. scene VI. of Moliere's Tartuffe.

that same *perhaps*. Heaven knows what may be the event ! Adieu, my ever dear and ever good girl, adieu.



LETTER DLI.

To the same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 8 September, 1680.

IT is renewing in my poor heart the pangs of separation, to discover to me, as you do, what grounds I have for apprehension. Do you recollect the arguments we had together about the loss of Charleroi, at the very time that Montal had been above a fortnight in possession of the place which he had relieved ? I find that I had just the same causeless apprehensions in regard to your cough : I am glad to have been deceived in this respect, and hope that the day will at length come when we shall be able to discourse more upon a certainty. At present we shoot at such a random distance, that it is next to an impossibility to hit the mark. I wait with great impatience for the decision which is to do such a credit to your prognostications.

Your brother is looking out for a wife from another quarter. We have been under most terrible apprehensions ; thank heaven, they at length proved to have been false alarms, and a few anodyne potions will finish the affair. This disorder, after all, has turned out a mere trifle ; it was nothing more than overflowing of the bile, occasioned

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occasioned by the heat of the medicines he had taken at Paris. I assure you it is no small joy to us all to be thus delivered from our fears.

I find then that you have left off bathing, my dear. It is surprising the relief you found by them in your cholicky complaint, without your breast suffering from the heat. I am charmed to find that you are returned to your afternoon's nap; indulge it, my dear, for it will be the secret means of strengthening you after that weakness which the warm bath generally leaves behind it.

Montgobert shall continue to oblige me sensibly, by giving me a true particular account of your health. She seems to be so happy in your recovery, and I look upon myself so much indebted to her for it, that I can hardly think this line of Corneille's applicable to her :

Qu'importe de mon cœur, si je fais mon devoir ?

What signifies my heart, if I do my duty?

On the contrary, I think we may rather turn it for her, thus, "What signifies my humours, my oddities, or my jealousy, if my heart does its duty?" I have received two of her letters together; she owed me the account of the success of the bathing: she has told me of the comical letters that passed between you all and Mr. de Coulanges: she likewise tells me what an infinite crowd of company pours in upon you from all sides; one can hardly think it possible for one roof to hold such a number of persons. I fancy you will yet have an addition in your three brothers-in-law; at least, the Chevalier writes in such a manner as

to put it past doubt. Really, your's is an odd kind of a retirement ; our's begins to lose its name ; my son has introduced new life amongst us. The good Princess goes on as usual ; she makes one at ombre with my son and Mr. du Pleffis ; and, in order that I may come in for my share of amusement, she now and then slips aside to give me a touch at reversis. All this is very sociable : however, to keep up the appearance of a retirement at least, I have had a shady walk made, almost as long as the great one, which I call my *Hermitage* : it is so beautiful, and so finely planted, that my son ought to kiss the prints of my footsteps every time I walk in it ; but as they amount to very near twelve hundred a day, and that it would be rather too violent exercise for him in the present heated state of his blood, I give him credit till a future day.

I have made use of your name in order to oblige the Princess to desist from teizing me with invectives against her poor daughter, who is a thousand miles off ; and by mere dint of telling her how truly happy she is, and asking her sincerely what she can desire more, I have at length brought her to write in a tender manner, and that from her heart too ; for her husband is not only rich and great, but is likewise a man of real merit. I have even persuaded her to pay the married couple a visit next year ; in short, my dear, I have done wonders. She desires a thousand and a thousand kind remembrances to you, and is of opinion that we are perfectly in the right to love each other as we do.

I have

I have said all that is to be said about Brancas's visit to Mademoiselle de Coulanges: be under no apprehension that he will make it such another as he did that he paid us at Vitré. Thoughtless as he is, he will take care, and do nothing that can hurt himself; he is more likely to mistake Lyons for Avignon, and forget that he was to go thither. I have also answered beforehand the article of Mr. de Pamiers*. Poor Sanguin is dead, that was an honest worthy creature! his family are inconsolable: here is a blue ribbon vacant; if his post † does not go to his son, pray Heaven that Mr. de Grignan may have it; nothing can better suit with the noble deportment for which he has ever been so remarkable; and it is the best place to support dignity with that can be. You cannot hinder me from revolving all these things in my mind when alone in my *Hermitage*. One end of it comes out upon a large spot at the end of the Mall, planted with four rows of trees, called the *Cloisters*; the other opens into the wilderness. It is one of the finest walks I am mistress of, or at least the newest. In this place then it is that I confer the aforesaid noble post upon your Lord. I would have you think seriously of the affair, and see if, with all the requisites you are possessed of, you cannot find a means to settle the elder brother, who would so well discharge the honours of the house. I have thrown this thought into my letter, as it will not

* See the letter of the 21st of August, vol. vii.

† That of Chief Master of the King's household, which Mr. de Sanguin had purchased of Marechal Bellefond, and which after passing successively to Mr. de Sanguin, Marquis of Livri, his sons and grandsons, is now held by the present Marquis de Livri, his great grandson.

enhance the postage, and as I think it is the only place in which you can retrieve your affairs, at the same time that you may live as well as the King himself. I shall not say any thing to you about Mr. de Vendôme; he either will or will not come. You will let me know how fate determines the affair.

I fancy you did not expect to be remembered by the Queen of Portugal *: Corbinnelli wrote me word how delighted he was at receiving a letter from you on the occasion of her exaltation. He tells me, that you assure him, that, notwithstanding your mutual silence, *your common father* †, (and I had like to have said *your uncommon mother*), form a connection between you. He is charmed that the Queen of Portugal has procured him the honour of your remembrance: he writes us most diverting letters: he is very well pleased with my son, because he has entered into this affair; and he relates the result of it in a very pleasant manner. M. de Montespan has declared himself his patron and protector: he has declared, that the person who shall act any thing contrary to the decisions of the arbitrators, shall forfeit two thousand pistoles, and has offered an hundred thousand franks to push the cause, if it is brought to an hearing. This is a style to which we are altogether strangers, and has much of the air of the Garonne in it. Two of the umpires are of the military, namely, Montespan and Montluc ‡; and two of the law, de Har-

* Mary-Frances-Elisabeth, youngest daughter of Charles-Amadeus of Savoy, Duke of Nemours, Queen of Portugal.

† Desfcar.

‡ Only one of these was in the army; Montluc being of the long robe.

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lai and Sainte-Foy ; whose name, to use a witty expression of Madame de Cornuel, is like that of the *Blancs Manteaux* *, who always went dressed in black. This has put new life into us all ; and Corbinelli is so tickled with it, that his letters are such as there is no reading without being ready to die with laughter.

Adieu, my dear child, the letter in which you acquaint me with the determination I so earnestly long for, will give me a sensible joy, though of a different nature. I leave my pen with your brother, who doubtless will begin with these lines :

*Now the horrors of war are all over,
Let us sing the soft blessings of peace †.*

* *Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ.*

In good truth, my dear pretty sister, I am as happy as any man can be ; but my mother begins to be sorry that she will have no opportunity to thank me for the care I took of her five years ago ; however, I give her credit for it with all my soul. She is to me full as well as I am, at least so she tells us : I am, for my part, very happy in her company, and this satisfaction alone will be sufficient to calm the ebullition of my blood.

Adieu, my dear sister ; there is just come in a fat gentleman from Vitre, which

* i. e. white cloaks.

† ———— Après les fureurs de la guerre,
Chantons, chantons les douceurs de la paix.

obliges me to quit you thus abruptly, in order to receive his tiresome visit with all due solemnity.

* *Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ*

I salute with all respect, and at the same time with all tenderness, the good Archbishop of Arles ; may God long preserve him to you ; listen to him as you ought while you have him with you. Let us not forget the Mesdemoiselles de Grignan, nor the pretty Paulina, nor my dear little Marquis. A thought is just come into my head ! the Abbé de Lanion shall succeed the Bishop of Pamiers ; will that please you ?



LETTER DLII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 11 Sept. 1680.

I Never could have imagined, that a letter, acquainting me that you intend coming to Paris this winter, and that I should see you there, would draw tears from my eyes ; yet such was the effect of the unutterable joy I felt at this assurance, added to the noble sentiment of that wise and holy child *. No, no, it is not always sorrow that opens the fountains of the eyes : tears flow from many different causes and sensations. I remember you formerly laughed at me for being

* See letter 18 August, vol. vii.

touched with the beauty of certain sentiments, in which I had no concern. It was impossible for me to refrain from being moved; judge then how I must be in hearing so affecting and virtuous a speech as that of Mademoiselle de Grignan! What resolution! what courage! I am sure there is a strong reliance to be placed on what she says: she has long weighed this declaration in her mind: she thinks firmly, as you very justly express yourself, and what she has once determined, is irrevocable. Your prognostications are very just; I did not know on what you founded your seeming certainty; so now, my dear, you are at length determined, by the most important, and, at the same time, the most advantageous circumstance that can happen to your family: it is a master stroke; and, on these occasions, a journey must be undertaken *in ogni modo*. Let me know every thing that is to follow upon this. Acquaint me with all your designs, in order that I may, as much as possible, accommodate mine to them.

I had not the least idea of the manner of the old Bishop's (of Evreux) death. It is really shocking to think of! Well might you say that it would surprise me; I was completely struck; I see the hand of God guiding the determination of the good prelate in a most extraordinary manner; guiding him to be torn in pieces, massacred! in short, quartered alive! Observe only how many different circumstances concurred to bring about the fate allotted for him! In the first place, to think of venturing on a journey in a coach at 84 years of age and upwards; then to have new horses hardly broken in; no postillion; the dissuasions of all his friends, nothing availed; he was

was doomed to pursue; he was doomed to be torn in pieces, and it was ordained that Messieurs de Grignan should reap the advantage of his disaster: good and ill fortune never come by halves; what a provision is here for the Chevalier!

There is no end to the visits which overwhelm you this year; one would think the parties were acting in concert to devour you: two tables of twelve each in that gallery. Yes, yes, I am the cause of all this, by mentioning those of Mr. de Chaulnes to you: really this is carrying things to excess; but perhaps you will, after all, tell me you are at little or no expence at Grignan, and I, Lord help me, shall believe you. However, I am not to learn what the article of provisions amount to on these occasions; and then there's play! How do you come off in that point? I have always in my mind those mists that wet one to the skin. My child, there are some people who seem born to spend money wherever they are, as others are born to be torn in pieces: no place is to them a place of rest, nor can they ever save a penny; profuseness and incessant round of company fly to them as straws to amber. There is no helping it; fate must have its course, and they get into a coach with four young horses without a postillion: but, heaven be praised, my dear, all this will not prove your destruction; and the old proverb may now be said to hold good, that a lucky marriage pays for all. You have not the least reason to apprehend that this affair will drop to the ground, after the steps that have been already taken; therefore enjoy yourself in full security of its happening: for my part, I must confess, it gives me the greatest satisfaction.

My

My father used to say, that he was always a good Christian whose mind was at ease; in that respect I am his own daughter.

It is thought that the Dauphiness is with child. Madame de Maintenon is still on the very pinnacle of favour. The King spends only a few moments between Madame de Montespan and Madame de Fontanges, which latter is still in a drooping way.

The Bishop of Rennes, who called upon me here in his return from Lavardin, told me, that, at the induction of Madame de Chelles*, the ornaments of the crown, the jewels about the sun that encloses the host, the exquisite music, the perfumes, and the great number of bishops that officiated at the ceremony, struck a good country lady who happened to be present with such astonishment, that she could not forbear crying out aloud, "Sure I am in paradise!" A person who sat near her, said to her, "No, no, Madame, there are not so many bishops there." Perhaps you will put this little story along with that I unluckily told one evening in your dressing-room; I cannot help it if you do, it is piping hot, and I could not keep it.

I intreat you to say whatever you think proper to the Archbishop in relation to my sentiments; they are such as you may venture to answer for: I desire the same in regard to Mr. de Grignan and his heavenly daughter, not forget-

* The sister of Madame de Fontanges, lately made Abbess of Chelles.

ting the earthly one. I embrace the little chits; for I will have no one forgotten. Montgobert wrote me word the other day, that Paulina read Voiture's letters to her, and that she enters into the spirit of them like one of us.



LETTER DLXIII.

To the same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 15 Sept. 1686.

WHAT infinite obligation has this poor heart of mine to you, my dear child! How happy have you made it by permitting it to hope for your presence this winter! I have read over and over again that delightful letter which I so fondly and impatiently expected: I said to myself, Yes, this is the voice of my child, that assures me she will come to Paris soon after All Saints. Oh, how great the joy, to have such a comfortable assurance in one's possession!

You surprise me with the profound secret, that our lovely saint * makes of her noble and pious intentions to Madame du Janet. It is so natural to talk of what we desire, of what our heart is full of, that it is already doing penance before-hand, to keep silence on this occasion; but such is her disposition: she speaks on this subject

* See letter of the 18th August, in the preceding volume.

to her holy father alone, as it is he alone who is to determine the duration of a residence which she would be sorry to have protracted. By depriving herself of the pleasure of communicating her intentions, she finds them more strongly confirmed in her breast.

I cannot at this distance discover what is become of the crowd that so lately swarmed in your castle. The last time I heard from you, methought you was in the midst of a fair; but since I find you reposed upon your little bed, you must certainly have found means to escape out of the throng. Montgobert has not wrote to me, and you mention your health but in a very cursory manner; you ought to have acquainted me whether the medicines you are taking have had the desired effect, and whether you are likely to get the better of your additional leanness, and be once more what you formerly was. It is a strange unhappiness, that what does you service in one disorder, should encrease another; this is throwing a damp upon the satisfaction one should otherwise feel.

We are at present among a set of company, with whom we make great use of our reason and argumentation. You taught me, my dear, to divest myself of a great part of that vulgar ignorance with which I was infected: I feel the pleasure of this on certain occasions. We have had a party or two at ombre and reversis, and the next day a change of the scene. M. de Montmoron arrived here; you know he has a great deal of wit; father Damaie, who lives not quite a hundred miles from this place; my son, who
you

you know is a perfect master at disputation; and Corbinelli's letters, all conspire to divert and amuse me. M. de Montmoron perfectly well understands your philosophy, and at the same time disputes it. My son maintains the cause of *your father*, Damaie does the same; and Corbinelli, in his letters, joins these two: but they are not all three more than a match for Montmoron. This latter insists that we can have no ideas of any thing but what affects our senses. My son will have it that we may think independent of our senses; for instance, *we think that we think*: this is in general the subject of our disputations, which have been carried on with great spirit and vivacity, and have delighted me extremely. Could you, my dear, have made a party in this conversation by your letter as Corbinelli has done, you would not have a little strengthened our poor Sévigné. And now I mention him, I must acquaint you, that he is still very far from being well, though he thinks himself out of danger, as indeed I do also; but he is sick of the doctor as well as you; he has taken more medicines than he had occasion for, and may have put his blood into such a ferment, that there is every day appearing some of those horrible eruptions which are so very disagreeable to those who have them, and those who see them; so that the poor lad is very happy to have a little leisure to live quiet at home.

Yesterday I was observing with admiration how very easy it is to console one's-self for the want of play by a better avocation, and how patient we are while we are making ducks and drakes of our money. But without imitating you, for I hate a bad copy of a good original, I shall

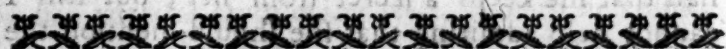
shall even tell you, that my age and experience make me wish, as a very material object, not to be always upon the spend, and that I could now and then put a little wit into this pericranium of mine; indeed it is what I am every day endeavouring to do when in my closet or my wood.

Methinks you would not be displeased to know the party that has engaged us in play of late. It is a tolerable pretty woman from Vitré, who has been here three nights, and during her stay we have hardly had the cards out of our hands, so fond is she of play. How much better does Mademoiselle de Grignan spend her time, happy creature! In reading your letter more carefully over, I find that she speaks without disguise of her intentions to Madame du Janet, and that it is only the conversation she had with Mr. de Grignan that she keeps a secret from her; but still I cannot help admiring that she should mention the one without the other. It must be no small satisfaction to her to have the conversation of so good and prudent a person. I reverence more than ever the wise dispensations of providence, when I reflect how it turns the movements you are about to my advantage, and I already begin to enjoy, in imagination, the pleasure I am to receive

I ask you a thousand pardons, my dear child, I have met with a little book of madrigals*, the most pretty things in the world. I must absolutely endeavour to bring them into your good graces this winter. Indeed, my dear, it is no small pleasure to have a bad memory, for we are

* Of La Sabliere.

now reading Sarasin again, and I am as pleased with him as the first time; we always find out something new, and your brother is of no small help to me by the excellent knack he has at these kinds of amusements. I had a mind to dip into the *Prepossession* †. I think them admirable; but what crowns the whole, my dearest child, is, all these things lead directly to you. Oh, how sweet the consolation, to think that we shall meet once again! Alas, a whole year has passed in continual farewells, mortifying occupation! I cannot look upon the *past* with so much tranquillity as you do. It is to me a source of the most bitter uneasiness, at least it has been such, till I read the pleasing assurance of your return; now I forgive it in consideration of the *future*, which offers itself to imagination, fraught with hopes that make amends for every thing.



LETTER DLIV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 18 Sept. 1680.

THE day before yesterday I was to make a visit to the princess, whom I told that you advised her to go to Paris, to which she is very much disposed, and the more so, as she is now enveloped in mourning, for you must know *Mu-*

† A work of Monsieur Nicole's, intitled, *Reasonable Prepossession* against the Calvinists.

dame's father* is dead, who is her brother-in-law. A clumsy German blundered out this accident to *Madame* without the least preparation, upon which nothing was to be heard but crying, sobbing and lamentations; nay, they say it went as far as fainting; but that I cannot believe, for she appears to me incapable of such a weakness, besides, nothing less than death can ever fix the volatile spirits of *Madame*. By the way, do you know that Langlade had lately his spirits so compleatly fixed, that his wife was hurried out of the room, and he himself stript and laid out for dead, when chance directing a physician that way (the scene lay in Poitou) this latter would needs see him (just like that other physician whom you told me of, that raised the dead lady to life); upon examining the supposed dead body, he thought he perceived some warmth in it; and thereupon administered certain medicines, while every one present made a jest of him. These medicines, however, operated forcibly by vomit, and *Madame de la Fayette* has received letters, which tell her that Langlade will certainly recover after all. Here now is a tale very much resembling that which you know. His death would have been a great loss to *Madame de la Fayette*, whose only comfort is in the few friends she has yet living.

I am told that Mr. de Selleri is spoken of as governor for the young Duke of Chartres, and *Madame de la Sabliere* for *Mademoiselle de Nantes* and de Tours §, but I do not believe a syllable of the matter: it would be rude to say why,

* Charles-Lewis, Count Palatine of the Rhine, one of the Electors of the Empire, who died 7th Sept. 1680.

§ Natural children of Lewis XIV. by *Madame de Montespan*.
but

but there are reasons more than sufficient. I know not which of the courtier's tongues first blabbed it out, but Madame de Maintenon is now every where privately called Madame de *Maintenant* *. This pun is not unworthy even the spot which you inhabit. This Lady de Maintenon, or de *Maintenant*, is every evening with his Majesty till eight or ten o'clock. She is conducted thither and back again by Mr. de Chamarante, in the face of all the world.

It is with great pleasure that I perceive the increase of holy dispositions in your daughter, and her impatience agrees perfectly well with mine. Have you not a great veneration for that pious soul? is she not a chosen vessel of grace, and a predestinated angel? We can no longer live and converse with her on the same footing as before; the favour of heaven commands the reverence of mortals. Let me continually know what you intend to do: methinks Mr. de Vendôme finds great difficulty in making known his designs.

I cannot enough admire your friendship in being so attentive to the disorder of MADEMOISELLE, and your not being willing to allow those born in 1627 the liberty of being ill. You have been more in pain about this princess than any one of her own noble family; and such is her misfortune that it must be I who am to thank you for your care; as I also do for your scheme of ridding us of that same post which so incumbers us. When we talk of taking up another, it is only in a case of extremity, and that we should be obliged to speak to Mr. de Louvois, because in this coun-

* Or the lady of *To-day*.

try people think that a man can neither live nor breathe without being in the service*: but the real object of our wishes is, to get rid entirely of this tie, which puts us under a disagreeable restraint; so that if you should hear of any one who is desirous of what is in fact no despicable place, and whose age will allow him to wait some years without impatience in the station of a subaltern, it would be the luckiest circumstance imaginable for us. If, my dear child, you should be the person set a part by fate to procure us this satisfaction, you may securely boast of having conferred the most sensible obligation on your poor brother. When he reflects how Mr. de la Trouffe has abandoned him, he is ready to go beside himself. You, my dear, set us the example of a philosophy truly admirable.

*Ainsi de vos desirs toujours Reine absolue,
Les plus grands changemens vous trouvent résolue.*

For, truly mistress of your own desires,
No change of fate can find you unprepared.

These lines will deserve a place in our remembrance, and this is a point to which providence naturally conducts us. If I am not in this happy situation of mind, it is not for want of frequent meditations, and a strict observance of his ways, by which I am more and more confirmed in the opinion that he is the governor of the world, and makes use of all our different ways of thinking, to bring us at length to answer his eternal decrees.

§ All this relates to Mr. de Sévigné, who wanted to resign his post of Guidon or Cornet, in the Dauphin's Gendarmes, or exchange it for some other.

Father

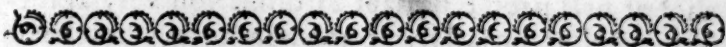
Father Damaie and myself now and then repeat over our old lessons, and are glad to have them. We cannot but smile at seeing the Father Prior of Livri at the Rocks, he has made a journey of twenty leagues on purpose to see us; we hope to keep him with us at least a week. He salutes you most respectfully; he has an high opinion of your wit and understanding, as also of your goodness of heart, and says he never can be unmindful of the friendship you have shewn towards him. I answered him in your name yesterday, for by that time your own arrives he will have been returned home above a fortnight. This gives one a shocking idea of our present separation, and I find occasion for all that hope which warms my heart on this prospect of speedily meeting together again. And, after all this, can you wonder at my admiring providence! Happy are those who know how to submit to its will when less favourable to their wishes!

I did not think that Cardinal d'Estrees would have gone to Rome; but since he is to go, our friend Coulanges is quite in the right to accompany him: however, I do not imagine that this will prevent his taking a trip to Grignan. We highly approve of your preparation for the Flemish benediction*; it is much better than that of the honest priests of this country, to whom we are always ready to answer, when they chant *Domine non sum dignus*, as you did once so aptly to the Blue-Coat Girls, *you are quite in the right*. I never shall forget that reply, it was certainly the most droll imaginable.

* See the Letter of Sept. 1, vol. vii.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dearest, never do you forget that I love you with so natural and tender an inclination, that I am not more myself than these sentiments are a part of me. This last period is not very elegantly closed, but it is sincerely true.



L E T T E R DLV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 22 September, 1680.

YOU are so much of the philosopher, my dear, that there is no such thing as giving a loose to the joy of one's heart with you. You are continually anticipating our hopes, and you pass over the enjoyment of present possession, to contemplate upon the hour of separation. Believe me, we ought more to admire the blessings which providence has in store for us. After having made you this reproach, it remains for me honestly to confess that I am deserving of the same, and that it is impossible for any one to be more alarmed at the cruel rapidity of time, nor to have a stronger foretaste of those uneasinesses which generally follow in the train of pleasures. In short, my dear child, this life is one perpetual chequer-work of good and ill, pleasure and pain. When in possession of what we desire, we are only so much the nearer losing it; and when at a distance from it, we are still in expectation of meeting with it again. It is our business, therefore, to take things as God

is pleased to send them. For my part, I am resolved to indulge myself in the delightful hope of seeing you without any mixture of alloy.

You are very unjust, my dear, in the judgment you pass upon yourself; you say, that tho' at first people are apt to think you very agreeable, yet, upon a longer acquaintance, they cease to have a regard for you; now the very reverse of this is truth: You have a certain air of superiority that makes people fearful of you, and despair of ever being admitted into the number of your friends; but when once they know you, it is impossible not to have an attachment for you: and if any of your acquaintance seem to drop you, it is only because they love you, and cannot bear the thought of not being so well beloved by you as they could wish. I have heard numbers of persons extol the charms of your friendship and conversation to the skies, and afterwards reflect on their own want of merit, which prevented them from preserving that happiness; they all blame themselves for the little shyness they experience in you; so that, where there is no real subject of complaint on either side, methinks it only requires a little tête-à-tête conversation to be perfectly good friends again.

Really, my dear, you have improved surprisingly upon what I told you concerning Brancas; that which you say of him is excessively pleasant, and absolutely true; it is just in this manner that he has always acted between his friends; he is for having good universally communicated, and is very desirous of entering into an holy connection with Madame de Coulanges, by giving her
that

that pretty woman for an acquaintance, as he gave her to Cardinal d'Estrées; for he was never easy till he made them mess-mates. This odd action has diverted me vastly, for I know him well, and this is exactly his character. There was a time indeed that he could not bear the thought of a rival, but at present he is willing to give his fair friend an acquaintance of his own chusing: you must remember the furious inquietude he was under on Tréville's account. In short, I can discover nothing more in all this than a great deal of friendship on a ground-work of inclination, heightened by passion. If Brancas should chance to be with you, do not tell him all this; you may give a hint or two, if you will, according as you find him in a humour for it.

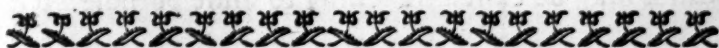
I have a great desire to read Terrence; and nothing could give me greater pleasure than to see the originals, of which the copies have afforded me so much satisfaction. We read books of controversy; one has been lately published (*) in answer to the *Prepossession*, to which I wish Mr. Arnauld had replied; but I fancy that he has been forbidden; and it is thought more adviseable to leave unanswered this book, tho' it may do an injury to religion, than to permit the publication of another that may serve to justify the Jansenists from the errors with which they have been reproached: but more of this another time. I have been promised the Coadjutor's speech, but I have not yet had it; my son and several others speak greatly in

* Written by the famous Protestant Minister C'aude, intitled, *A Defence of the Reformation, against the Reasonable Prepossessions of Nicole.*

praise of it. But now let us talk a little about your health.

Are you not terrified at these same cold and benumbed legs of yours? Is it possible that in the country of warm baths you should suffer your poor limbs thus to *perish*, and not to have any feeling of them but by intervals of pain? Are there no frupes, no fomentations, that will recall the vital juices to the parts they have thus deserted? or do you look upon this disorder as a thing of no moment? The bath, you say, has done you no good; but are you therefore to try no other remedy? Is it possible that a continuance of such a disagreeable and dangerous malady can reconcile it to any one? Would to heaven we could once more resume an healthy correspondence, I could part with a good deal of my health, without feeling the want of it. Farewel, my dear child, my thoughts are wholly taken up with you, with your love, your health, and the pleasure I shall have in embracing you ere long. I am but too happy in that hope, which I am determined not to damp by any gloomy thoughts or ungrateful forecast.

LETTER



L E T T E R DLVI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 15 Sept. 1680.

YOU think only, my dear, of quieting my fear on account of your health, and I am apt to believe that you conceal the truth even from Montgobert. I cannot but consider this as an instance of your regard for me, yet it occasions me a good deal of uneasiness; and nothing adds more to the extreme impatience I am in to see you, than the desire of being no longer in the dark on a subject so interesting to me. Put yourself for a moment in my place, and you will be convinced that these sentiments are entirely natural.

They tell me that the Chevalier is in a manner well, and therefore I imagine his journey will not be retarded. But now we are upon the subjects of journeys, let us speak a word or two about your's: endeavour to set out, if possible, before the bad weather sets in; and, above all things, take care to lay in a stock of health and strength, to carry you thro' it; but, indeed, I think your journeys have never done you any harm. The Princess of Tarentum, who by the way makes you her compliments, assures me, that she is never so well as when she is making the tour of the

world; she has been twice in Denmark, which I think may be called travelling to some purpose.

I have a few questions to ask you: has Mademoiselle de Grignan any inclination to see Paris once more, or does she immediately enter into her destined retreat? Is it St. Stephen's or the Carmelites (*) she has made choice of? Does her zeal flag, or does it continue as warm as ever? Do you intend to bring your son with you? These questions I ask you with great leisure, and hope you will answer them in the same manner. Pray inform me by the Pythian Priestess of the little republic that is to assemble at Grignan. We have had a most delightful season here, have read a great deal, and, as I observed before, I feel the satisfaction of want of memory; for Corneille, Boileau, Sarasin, and Voiture, have all the air of novelty to me. We now and then dip a little into Plutarch's morals, which we find admirable; besides, we have in stock the *Prepossessions*, the answers to them; not to mention the Alcoran: in short, we leave hardly any thing unturned; the little time that remains will soon be gone. May it please heaven to grant you health! this is all I wish, and all I want. My son sends you a thousand affectionate remembrances; but you are both of you so old and worn out, that it is the business of my life to nurse you.

* The latter of these, in the Fauxbourg (or suburbs) of St. James, was the place made choice of by this excellent lady; but her health not permitting her to continue there long, she once more entered into the world again; nevertheless she always continued single, and led a life of the most exemplary piety till the 19th February 1735, when she exchanged this state for a better.

Pray,

Pray make all our compliments to the numerous and polite company with which you are surrounded. Madame de Coulanges has wrote me that you are coming to Paris, which gives her no small pleasure; her letter is very pretty, she expects Brancas. We must be silent after what you have said, concerning the connection he wants to bring about. Mademoiselle de Scudéri has just sent me two little volumes of Conversations; it is impossible they can be other than good, provided she is not buried in her great romance.



LETTER DLVII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 29 September, 1680.

IT is indeed a republic, nay it is a little world, that you have at present in your house; I never saw such a crowd there. Montgobert talks to me of quintille, I know not what game that is; but notwithstanding that we are in a desert in comparison of you, we have frequently our parties of play, such as trictrac, ombre, &c. and we have Madame de Marbeuf with us at present, who, you know, makes one at any thing, out of pure good nature and complaisance. The Princess enlightens this retreat, like another Galatea; she is in mourning for her brother-in-law the Elector Palatine: indeed there must not be a person of any consequence in Europe sick, for her to be out of danger of losing some relation.

We have some folks at Vitré, whom you know as little of as you know the *Hermitage* (†). I know not how it happens; but methinks I had rather be without them, and have more time for reading and walking. The *Hermitage* is just in the place you mention; but it is so straight, and so well planted, that it would surprise you; however, I think it is high time for me to think of different matters.

When I reflect that I am to meet with you at the end of my journey, it appears so great an happiness that I cannot help dreading some obstacle in the way. Could any thing have been more vexatious to you than the Chevalier's indisposition? I have shared with you in all the uneasiness it must have given you. However, he writes me word that he hopes soon to be in a condition to set out, and that both himself and his brother the Bishop of Eyreux owe their cure to the skill of one of the English physicians, whose nostrum has indeed worked miracles this year, as the Duke de Lefdigières and many others have experienced. I have wrote to the Chevalier in return, that his recovery gives me so much the greater pleasure as I think the journey very necessary for him. I am persuaded that every thing will be properly adjusted, both in regard to this and our other visitors at Grignan.

I am amazed that you know nothing yet concerning Mr. de Vendôme, nor a new Intendant; both these articles will come upon you

† See Letter of the 8th Sept.

when

when you least expect them. What I wrote to you concerning the change your brother wishes, was a thought of Madame de la Fayette's, when we were considering how to get clear of Mr. de Louvois, with whom there is no other way of dealing but by proposing an exchange; however, this must be reserved for the last cast. Our first business must be to endeavour to get rid of the place; and upon this subject we must consult our friends.

I hope we shall all meet together at Paris, where we may confer freely upon all these subjects. All I have to request of you is, that you will prepare yourself to travel without any inconvenience; this is the principal thing to be thought of.

I cannot tell when this same ball is to be; this however I know for certain, that it will not equal that in which my charming daughter danced, in which such and such persons assisted, in which she entertained us with so charming a step; and then, as you may guess, I shall be ready to relate all the circumstances of that entertainment; but, in short, mother's fondness and boasting apart, I verily believe, my dear, that you yourself will confess that it will be far inferior to your's, and that there were four persons about the late MADAME, that whole ages will not be able to parallel, either for beauty, youth, or gracefulness in dancing; what shepherdesses! what Amazons! Every one seems to want some excuse from this now in agitation; the Duchess of Sully pleads family-affairs, Madame de Verneuil her christening, and so on; but the Dauphiness has shewn herself so determined on this head, that there is nothing left but to obey.

Farewel, my dear child; give yourself no uneasiness about my health; nothing can be better; would to heaven I had reason to think the same of your's! I feel no inconvenience from the damps; I have a number of little arbours in which I sit and read, or chat, quite out of the weather; and then there is the mall, which is as snug and as warm as a gallery.



LETTER DLVIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 2 October, 1680.

WELL, heaven be praised, my dear, there is an end at length to your uneasiness, in which I have so sincerely participated with you. The Abbé of Pontcaré writes me word, that the Chevalier and the Bishop have entirely got rid of their fever; and the little plans, which seemed to have been disconcerted, now go on as usual. Thanks to the good Englishman, whose reputation is indeed very great this year. I am sorry to hear of the journey Mr. de Grignan was obliged to take; I suppose he will be returned by the time you receive my letter, nevertheless I cannot help dwelling a little upon the subject. What a bomb was this that burst on a sudden, even in the very midst of your autumnal feasts and pastimes! It is indeed giving up a great deal, to quit your house with such pleasing company, such excellent music,

fic, and such good cheer. I do not think any monk could suffer more from his vow of mortification. These same folks from Messina, who cause others more fear than they do them harm, hurt you, as you observe, more than they frighten you. My God! what an expence! and how ill-timed too! I feel all these inconveniences for you, but at the same time I foresee with pleasure the time approaching when they will be no more; till then, however, I tremble for your health, which, I am afraid, must suffer, from these continual interruptions. I have seen you plunged into a thoughtfulness for things of much less moment. I am persuaded that you will not see Mr. de Vendôme this season, but that will not delay your departure. You may wait for Mr. de Grignan at Paris, as you have done before. You have more reason than any one, I know, not to expose yourself to the bad weather; as for our parts, my dear, we only wait till All-Saints is passed, and then we shall be moving.

I proposed five or six little questions to you in my last letter but one, concerning Mademoiselle de Grignan, to which you will favour me with an answer. That pious lady is the object of my admiration. You say, that she has no director but herself; believe me, she cannot have a better. Leave her then to her own management, and agree with me that (from all appearances) no conscience was ever better regulated.

Madame de la Fayette writes me word, that every one is falling down with the fever; she says, it is like a volley of shot fired into a crowded trench, but with this difference, that of the numbers wounded few or none die.

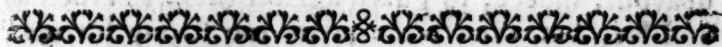
I have acquainted the Princess of Tarentum with what providence and you had undertaken for her daughter; I believe that finding you both against her, will be a means of confirming her in the good dispositions which she seems of late to have cherished; she says a thousand handsome things of you. She asked me, jesting, what business it was of your's, whether she loved her daughter or not? I told her, that you could not bear the thoughts of there being any child in the world so unhappy as to be deprived of the affection of such a mother as herself. This speech seemed to have no bad effect.

You doubtless know that Madame de Ludre, weary of being in the dumps without any one caring for it, has at length obtained leave of her pride to accept the King's pension of 2000 crowns, and 25,000 franks, for paying her poor creditors; who, not having been affronted, were very willing to pocket the affront of being paid their own, without standing upon the manner of its being done. They say Ludre still continues as handsome as ever.

Indeed, indeed, child, I could find in my heart to scold you handsomely, for making so slight of your insufferable leanness! If this is out of resignation, it is truly meritorious; but if it is from any other motive, you are certainly to blame; for my part, I am desirous to see you plump and strong: in a word, that it would please God to restore you your health, with all its circumstances and appendages.

You

You will allow, my dear, that it is quite natural that I should acquaint you with an accident that has happened this very day. You know my horses, and that they are esteemed a very fine set: well, that one whom we called *Favourite*, being in the field at work to-day, the driver gave him a cut of his whip, which he took in such high dudgeon, that he began prancing and kicking like a fury, upon which they went to unloose him; but off he sat upon a full gallop, and running with great violence against a gate, killed himself upon the spot. When I saw him in that condition, I said, like Mr. de M——, see what we must all come to! and here ends my tale. I would have you to know, that I have supported this misfortune like an heroine, and that it shall not stop my journey to Paris one second of time.



L E T T E R DLIX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 6 Oct. 1680.

I HAVE kept pace with you, my dear child, in all your moments of inquietude; distance is cruel on these occasions; we torment ourselves at the very time we should rejoice: and, heaven be praised, we have not hitherto had any cause to repent our having rejoiced, when we should have mourned. The indisposition of your brothers was nothing more than common, nor attended with the least bad consequence. They ob-
served

served the Englishman's prescriptions, as if you yourself had been present to nurse them, as you did our poor dear Abbé; like him they found the benefit of their observance. They are now perfectly well, and write me word, that they think of setting out incontinently. Nothing now was wanting but to know this, to have set your mind at ease; but then, when one is so far off, one is a prey to every kind of dreary imaginations. The post does not come in every day, and when it does, there is such palpitations, such terrors! I know but too well what these kind of torments are; a health so delicate as your's, and liable to such frequent reverses, together with that thin habit of body, which is so little suited to resist the attack of such a fever as you had last year, cannot fail giving me subject for many melancholy reflections. I endeavour, indeed, to guard against them as much as possible, but they often prove too strong for me; and know perfectly well how to chuse the moment for making their attacks.

The reflections which you make concerning the disappointments most of our projects meet with, are perfectly just and reasonable. This is one of my common meditations; insomuch, that I comfort myself for the little interruptions that attend the hopes of seeing you at Paris, by the apprehension I should be under, lest some unforeseen accident should happen, was my joy on that prospect to be pure and uninterrupted: I, therefore, suffer it to be a little clouded, that I may behold its approach with more confidence. How has your autumn, which promised to pass so agreeably, been clouded by an unlooked-for storm in the midst of its sunshine! But I am in hopes these clouds will
all

all blow over, that the sky will again become serene, and your joys suffer only a little retardment. You will soon have Mr. de Grignan from Marseilles, and your brothers from Paris. I am quite in the dark as to the Coadjutor's affair; I fancy it will cost him some money, and this may, perhaps, be worse than the fever; for, I believe, the Englishman, with all his skill, has no nostrum against the necessity of paying money, as he has against the fever.

Indeed I cannot sufficiently admire your having passed two hours in company with a Jansenist, without disputation; you must have an excellent stock of patience, to have listened to all his trite and insipid maxims. I assure you, that notwithstanding you have often so politely waved this subject, I have ever believed you to be of the same opinion with myself; and was not a little mortified, that you would not permit me to have a little chat with you, upon a subject that I am fond of, knowing, as I do, that at the bottom you are perfectly right and orthodox in your sentiments. I could never have had so much patience with these reverend fathers. I met one of them at Vichi, and we went together by the ears at the first visit, which so disconcerted the good man's spirit, that he was obliged to go to Saint Mion to drink the waters, to cool himself. As you read St. Paul's epistles, you are at the fountain head; and, therefore, I will say no more to you on the subject. Let us now talk a little of your poor brother.

A rascally surgeon at Paris, after having made him swallow a shop-full of medicines, assured him, that he is perfectly cured, and has
nothing

nothing more to do than follow a milk diet for a little time, just to cool and purify his blood. Your brother followed his advice, but soon found himself in a condition that made him curse both doctor and prescription; and not only lost a time that was very precious, but was at length obliged to apply to the other person, who, as I told you, has great skill, and is now managing him in such a manner, as to give us great hopes, that ere long his health will be perfectly recovered. Madame de Marbeuf, a very pretty little woman from Vitre, and myself, do all in our power to amuse and divert him; and sometimes a neighbour or two step in to make a party at ombre with him. He is very patient, and, what with play and his books, for which he has still a relish, he makes shift to pass his time tolerably well. Methinks I hear you say, "But after all, my dear mama, is not his disorder guessed at?" Why, yes, child; there is no need of being a conjurer to find it out. But as I said before, he is very patient; and the best joke is, that his present situation saves him a shame that would be insupportable, if this accident had happened to him in the field; in short, when he reflects when and how, and under what a shew of friendship his easy youth has been imposed upon, he is perfectly indifferent who knows of it, as if these circumstances would either lessen the present pain, or the offence he has given to God. We may truly say in this case, *Popinione regina del monda*. Opinion rules the word. In short, my dear, this poor brother of your's would make you pity him, was you to see what he endures. I believe I shall now have an opportunity of requiting him, for the care he took of me when I was ill. Heaven will not suffer me to be in debt to him.

amillion

The

The Prince is very ill, and France may possibly lose this great Captain. My son sends you many kind remembrances; he is overjoyed at the thought of our seeing you this winter; and both of us flatter ourselves, that this journey will prove more agreeable, and less fatiguing, than the last. If you was as good as you should be, you would give me the pleasure of letting me know, that you will go to Lyons in a litter; and that as far as Montélimart, at least, you will keep the great road, without attempting those terrible precipices, where, to save half a mile, Madame de Coulanges ran the hazard of being dashed in pieces half a score times. If you would abuse me in this respect, it would save my poor imagination many terrors that it suffers from those dreadful banks of the Rhone.

The Abbé de Pontcarré writes me word, that the son of Mr. de Morant, Counsellor of State, is nominated Intendant of Provence. He is very much of the gentleman, and I believe you will like him. Mr. de Morant is own nephew to Madame de Leuville, a friend of Mr. de Grignan's. I think you are very happy in having the Archbishop of Arles with you, and such frequent opportunities of profiting by his good conversation. You make several very solid reflections, and I make some on my side also; indeed, how can one fail of making reflections on what daily passes before our eyes? Pray assure the worthy Prelate of my respectful esteem.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R DLX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Oct. 9, 1680.

HOW I pity you for giving yourself up to such cruel anxieties as you do: believe me, you have not strength to support them: you put your blood in a ferment; you waste your spirits, and blind yourself, and are for ever fearing the worst. Alas! my dear child, the very day after you wrote your last letter, you must have found that your brothers were perfectly recovered; in short, no one was in danger but yourself, thro' your too great sensibility of heart, and vivacity of imagination: I foresaw and felt for all that you have suffered. The Chevalier must be set out by this time, and you must have found ease from your fears. I cannot chuse, but admire the curious precaution of those who would not tell you of your brother's illness, but left you to be made acquainted with it, by a letter that was not directed to you, and which certainly made more of the affair than there was really in it. I hope, my dear, what I have wrote you concerning your brother Sévigné's disorder will not give you fresh uneasiness; he has indeed a great deal yet to suffer; but as he has a great share of patience, as he is resolved to be completely cured, and as there is no danger, you will not, I trust, alarm yourself upon his account or mine. He is so happy in being here, that I could not prevail on him to listen to a proposal I made him of setting out immediately for Paris in a litter,

on

on account of the pains in his head, while I would follow him in my coach. He has a great confidence in the person who has the care of him here ; he has left a week or ten days of bad weather, to be at length as if he had been washed seven times in the river Jordan. In short, I will inform you of all the consequences of this curious adventure as they arise. Mr. de la Rochefoucauld, who wrote so many extraordinary things, would certainly never have let this have passed him. What do you think of my son while he was at Paris, telling the whole history of his misfortunes to Madame de la Fayette, and about a dozen ladies more of her acquaintance ? Was not this a pretty kind of a secret to trust with half a score persons ? For my part, I never was more surpris'd in my life, than to find how light he made of this affair. I imagined he would have suffered death, sooner than have opened his lips about it to any one ; but since he is so very communicative, I see no reason why I may not be the same.

Madame de Vins writes me word that Mr. de Vendôme and Mr. de Morant are going to set out for Provence ; this will determine Mr. Grignan in his resolutions, by giving him a prospect of the end of that career, which he has run so nobly, and by which he has merited the brightest rewards : who knows but fate has them yet in store for him ? Mr. d'Hautefort is dead, so that there is another blue garter vacant. He could never be prevailed on to take the English medicine, because it was too dear. He was told that at most the expence would not be above forty pistoles : " Ah ! cried he, that's too much," and so expired. MONSEIGNEUR has been cured by
this

this specific; what will become now of the faculty?

Montgobert tells me, that you will go to Paris; I am going to write her a letter of thanks for this good news, and assure her how happy it makes me. Your brother's illness, by giving me a little concern, frees me from the apprehension that an uninterrupted joy would otherwise give me.

Farewel, my dearest girl, continue well, gather strength, eat, sleep, and recover your former health. Madame de Marbeuf is still here; she makes you a thousand compliments; she is determined not to leave my son, *till she has seen him daily hanged**; it is the most friendly creature in the world! Poor Count! he had great occasion indeed to hurry again to Toulon and Marseilles, to be at a great deal of pains to spend a great deal of money, and, after all, to be obliged to go and meet Mr. de Vendôme: the thought of all this almost turns my poor head.

* See Moliere's *Médecin malgré lui* (the Forced Physician) Act III. Scene 9.

LETTER

LETTER DLXI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 13 October, 1680.

MY son is in a condition truly pitiable; he is so thin, so shrivelled, and so dejected, and his beard is of such an horrible length, that you would not know him again; and yet, when he has any intervals of ease, he plays at ombre, and chats: he loves to be fondled, and thinks he begins to recover. It vexes me when I think for whom he suffers! for an ingrate, nay, what is still worse, for one whom he has not, nor ever had any real love for. Madame de Coulanges writes me very comically that the cure of the lady is a public benefit. Her letter is very amusing. She proposes, as every one does that knows you, no small pleasure to herself in enjoying your neighbourhood this winter, and renewing old connections. As you have Mr. de Coulanges with you, I doubt not of your being perfectly happy; now is the time for putting a trick upon Mr. de Grignan; it would be no bad joke to put the little body Coulanges in a box, or suppose the Abbe Viani's Theorbo case, for you can never pretend to produce him simply, as you can another person. I must confess that I was altogether for the journey to Rome*; there were a thousand

* See the letter of the 18th Sept,

circumstances

circumstances that rendered it agreeable; and I had, moreover, a thousand little reasons of my own which I could yet produce if there was occasion for them, but that would be like bringing an army into the field when there was no enemy to engage. I am extremely glad that Coulanges has followed your advice, which was much preferable to any other; I should be glad to see the little man again. Madame de Coulanges had no reason on her side to wish him to make the journey in question, for his company is far from being irksome to her.

What say you, my dear, of Montgobert's mind now, or rather of her heart? Is it not exactly what I undertook to answer that it was? I was intimately well acquainted with it, though it was concealed beneath certain disquiétudes, apprehensions, and anxieties, that all proceeded from friendship, attachment, and jealousy; and when you said,

*Mind not my heart, while I perform my duty**,

I, you know, said quite the contrary; I always wished for some of those happy conversations which so much contribute to restore drooping friendship, and in which every accent, every look, creates a desirable effect. I did mention this to you, but the time was not come; every thing must have its time, even to the boiling of an egg; but after all, I am surprised that Montgobert has not made me acquainted with this piece of good news, knowing, as she does, how much I interest myself therein. You see now that we

* *Qu'importe de mon cœur, si je fais mon devoir?*

are not always to judge by appearances; you imagined that there was little or nothing in that heart, and you have found to the contrary. You may possibly find the same with regard to that of your neighbour*; I have observed a great tenderness and sensibility in that quarter. I am sorry that you have not yet met with one of those happy moments, in which the soul speaks so intelligibly. The friendship that has subsisted was not of that kind which is formed for saying, "I did love you once, but I love you no longer," but to be solid and unshaken. The coolness that at present subsists between you and him is so much the more dangerous, as it is concealed beneath a smiling outside, and a number of civil and obliging speeches; in a word, there is an appearance of something without any foundation: to return your own description of it, it is "a perfect retrenchment of every kind of connection, confidence, and affection;" a curious kind of friendship indeed! a very curious kind of friendship! I shall be apt to say to you as the Marshal de Gramont did on another occasion, "Why, good folks, though I make you embrace each other, I see nothing that should hinder your cutting one another's throats, whenever you please." All these matters, however, will put on a different face, when the time comes. I long most impatiently for that which is to give you once more to my arms.

Madame de Marbeuf is with me still; we are happy in her company, and she in

* The person here hinted at by Mad. de Sévigné was Mr. de la Garde, whose Barony lay contiguous to the Countship (or Earldom) of Mr. de Grignan.

ours,

ours, and yet she will be going, from no other reason that I know, but that people cannot be contented when they are well. She has written to Mr. de Coulanges, to acquaint him of the good fortune of Mademoiselle Descartes, to whom the Duchess of Chaulnes has given a pretty pension. This young Lady is as learned as her uncle and yourself.



LETTER DLXII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday, 16 October, 1680.

I Am highly pleased with your last letter; but after all it was too long, and must have fatigued you, otherwise it was very acceptable, and made no inconsiderable part of our tranquil domestic amusements; nor would it have failed of finding a place, even in the midst of the dazzling pleasures of Versailles, had I been there. There are certain things in life which no objects, no dissipations, can ever drive from the remembrance.

As to myself, my dear, I am as well as can be wished, and have found infinite benefit from my linseed tea. You are certainly capable to teach me many things; but I will not apply to you, nor any creature living, for directions in sincerity and friendship; no, I am incapable of hiding from you any disorder I should labour under.

under. I do not love to deceive you; but do you, my dear, act with the same openness towards me? do you tell me, without disguise, the true state of that same breast of your's? Indeed, I have lately received great comfort from Montgobert's letters, for as she has frequently told me the truth, which you would sometimes conceal from me, I can put the greater confidence in her present assurances relating to your amendment: but I cannot conceive how it comes about that she has not said a syllable to me of the infinite satisfaction she must have received in being perfectly reconciled to you. Your different sentiments with regard to each other, gave me no little uneasiness; I was perfectly well acquainted with her heart, and could see to the bottom of it, through all the little mists and vapours with which it was obscured. You know, I told you that I was sure you would find it fair as you could wish; own, then, that I was not deceived, and that it is impossible for any one to love you in a middling way: but in fine, I hope you are now entirely cured of your prepossessions; however, I must still return to the old strain, and declare my astonishment at Montgobert's having so long delayed to make me a partner in her satisfaction.

When I read the impossibility you are still under of bearing Mademoiselle de Grignan's noble resolutions, it brought the tears in my eyes: what can be the meaning of this emotion, this overflowing of the heart, in regard to a thing that we approve, that we applaud, and are pleased with? Her noble resolutions inspires every one who knows her with admiration and affection. We look upon her as a person distinguished by

particular gifts from heaven. Tell me your sentiments upon this subject; let me know how you have planned your intended journey, and give me credit for all that heart-felt joy I experience on your approaching return, though, indeed, if I wanted to lessen it, I need not seek far. I have too serious a subject of uneasiness in my son. As his head-ach and fevers continue to baffle the power of all the medicines he has hitherto tried, I have endeavoured to persuade him to go to Paris, that fountain ofills and cures; but he will not hear of it, he looks upon the whole as a trifle. Lord help me! I have no sort of power over my children. The poor lad seems to think himself very happy where he is, he diverts himself with reading, chatting, and now and then playing at ombre. He seems pleased with my care of him, and I think myself happy to have it in my power to contribute anything to his ease. He desires me to make his most affectionate remembrances to you; he is almost every post going to write to you, but his pains prevent him from taking pen in hand. I will let you know how all this turns out, perhaps we may be surprised with some agreeable and unlooked for change.

I find that you have Coulanges still with you; really, my dear, you are a charming figure, seated under a sack of apples at the foot of your fig-tree, with a basket of figs and grapes before you! This is admirable, provided you have strength equal to your courage, and do not affect the airs of an athletic person; when, in fact, you are but one of the puny tribe. It is true, indeed, that Mrs. de Coulanges did promise to men that he would keep a strict eye upon all your actions, and

give

give me a faithful account of them, but I found in his very first letter that he had conspired with the rest to flatter me.

I thought my son would have burst himself with laughing the other day, in spite of all his sufferings, at poor Mademoiselle du Plessis, whose vanity is become quite insupportable since I procured her the honour of a line from you. You must know, then, that this same damsel happening to say something the other day more ridiculous than common, I, on my part, put on an air somewhat above the common, and said to her, "Really, child, you are quite foolish; not that I love to speak sharply to people." My son stopt me short in the midst of this curious speech, which was a great pity, for it promised something extraordinary. You will say, perhaps, this is an anecdote very little worth committing to paper, but it happened to strike your poor brother in a droll manner; and so farewell, my dear girl.

* L E T T E R DLXIII.

To the same.

The Rocks, Sunday, 20 Oct. 1680.

W H E N you receive this letter, you may say, "My mother is at Paris." I shall set out to-morrow morning, and with me goes my son, in hopes of finding some relief in

that great city, which, with the poet, we may say is,

The cause and cure of every ill †.

Our good honest and sincere physician has fairly told us, that the distemper eames his skill; that he does not dare hazard those remedies which seem alone likely to succeed, and therefore desires us to be gone as soon as possible, assuring us withal, that we may undertake the journey without any bad consequences. We have therefore determined to set out, my son has consented himself to be persuaded to undergo the fatigue, in hopes that health will be the reward of his toils. This has been the subject of our meditation for these last two days; a few hours have brought about what a whole month would not have done in any other situation; and it has pleased Providence that I should be carried back to Paris by other motives than that of going to meet you. However this early return will give me an opportunity of getting your apartment quite in readiness to receive you.

You say you are perfectly well, I am sure it is happy for me if you are so; it would be more than I could well support to have both my children ill under my eye. You was in high spirits, my dear, when you wrote your last letter, nothing can be prettier than your jealousy, the application you make of it is admirable, and diverted me exceedingly.

Farewel, my dear, farewel; I spend all my time in gossiping to you, while I have a

† *Et comme il fait les maux, il fait les medecines.*

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thousand things to do; I must go and help the good Abbé, and I have some papers to sign. I have had a farewell visit from the Princess, who is extremely good and obliging, and from all the rest of the good folks who have wished me gone a long while since, but our hearts were not then turned; there must be a time for all things, you know. The roads are very good, and God, I trust, will conduct us in safety. I am in great hopes that we shall find a perfect cure in Paris, which has been refused us here thro' the high veneration in which we are held; but as that will not be the case where we are going, we set out full of hopes; and I cannot sufficiently admire how chance has made necessity an instrument to bring about what you seem so earnestly to desire; but I shall be there ready to receive you at your arrival. I could never have imagined that things would have turned out in this manner.



L E T T E R DLXIV.

To the Same.

Malicorne, Wednesday, 23 October, 1680.

WELL, here we are on our way for Paris, full of the most pleasing hopes on our arrival there; and indeed there is no time to be lost in procuring some relief for this poor lad of our's; his constant pains in his head, the uneasiness this causes in him, together with a beard like

Lauzun*, have changed him in such a manner that he is hardly to be known again. We endeavour to render the journey as easy to him as possible, so that we go at a snail's pace and leisure, as he can seldom get a wink of sleep till day-break, we cannot set out till near ten o'clock in the morning, and we get in just where we can. We found it impossible to reach Sable, and so we even took up our quarters in a little hen-roost, not above a yard or two from that in which I sweated so plentifully five years since. However, be not under any apprehension about your brother's safety, for as I told you the other day, Paris will prove the Jordan from whence he will come forth pure and immaculate.

You say that you never mention providence but when you have the disorder of your breast, and, for my part, that subject always gave me a pain there: I cannot find any one topic on which there is so large a field for argumentation, observation and examination; and why may we not discourse as well about this, as about natural philosophy? And why do you not still say, as you did last year, that our apprehensions, our reasonings, our determinations, and conclusions, are only so many executioners of the will of heaven? Is not this an inexhaustible subject, fraught with the most entertaining variety? For instance, I think it would be hardly possible to inform you of the one half of what has passed at the Rocks during these last two months: the confidence reposed in a person thought to be very skilful in his profession, the

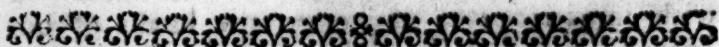
* Mr. de Lauzun never would suffer his beard to be shaved while he remained in confinement at Pignerol,

wilful blindness, the affected laziness, the fondness for home, the disregard of my advice, from a want of proper disposition of mind, and of that of every other friend who wanted us to be gone, and the reasons that prevented me from contradicting; all this, notwithstanding my aversion to a longer stay, all this, I say, has made such a sarrago of sentiments and opinions; that it would give any one a disorder of the lungs only to recount them: all this appeared to me as a great machine, of which providence managed the springs and wheels, and the result of which, I thought, I could plainly foresee, when all on a sudden our black was turned to white; what we were before so very fond of we now held in detestation; the hated Paris became a desirable object, my advice was listened to and approved, my sincerity acknowledged, their own case appeared in its true colour, and in two days time away we moved, and are now burning with impatience to arrive on the banks of our Jordan; for such it will be after all. Such matters will furnish us with infinite subject for conversation, my dear; and altho' this hurry has not been altogether upon your account, yet I shall by this means be the better prepared to receive you. Take my word for it, that there is no experiment in philosophy more amusing than the investigation of the connection and diversity of our several sentiments, so that you see, *it is God's will*, may be paraphrased in a thousand different ways.

My dear, you are very obliging to desire me to let the Archbishop know how much you are concerned at his departure; it is doing my poor letters infinite honour: nevertheless I am extremely

tremely happy that you find me serviceable to you in any respect.

I had quite forgotten to mention Madame de Ville-Dieu to you; did the poor creature die after that violent fit? I was acquainted with the departure of Mr. de Vendôme and your Intendant, and I said just as you do. Farewel, my dear child, it is time to go to bed; we have not been able to take a walk in any place, we must have some time to rest ourselves, for to-morrow we set out again. My Abbé and our poor Invalid send a thousand kind remembrances to you. In the midst of all the anxieties I have mentioned to you, I cheer myself with the pleasing prospect of soon beholding you, and embracing you with all the overflowings of maternal affection.



LETTER DLXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 30 October, 1680.

I Arrived here last night, my dear, with the weather most delightfully fine; if you are wise, as I take you to be, you will make hay while the sun shines, and not wait till the change of the moon, which may bring with it heavy rains and bad roads. I wrote to you from Malicorne in what manner we endeavoured to beguile the
suffer-

sufferings of your poor brother; we have at length succeeded so happily, that we have got rid of his fever and other complaints; so that the matter is no more than to recover him, and not to raise him from the dead; and this we are going to set about with all our strength.

I found the Chevalier here at our arrival, we had a great deal of chat; he told me several particulars that were very agreeable, which I will communicate to you, for I fancy he has not thought it prudent to commit them to writing. I am greatly pleased that he is under this roof, and wish he could remain here; however, he will not leave this neighbourhood, as his chief interest lies here; the knowledge of this, I believe, cannot fail of giving you pleasure.

You desire me to receive you with sensible joy; alas! my sweet girl, how can it be otherwise? The Chevalier and I have both seen your apartment, it is really very pretty, and I am sure will please you. I find that Madame de Ville-Dieu is to take Paulina with her; we had much rather she had come up with you, that would indeed have been a pleasure. Mr. de la Garde writes me word, that Paulina took my advice last year, and sowed her petticoat to your's in the prettiest manner imaginable. I perfectly well guess at your vexation, in not having taken your leave of the Archbishop. Alas! my dear, what can we think in taking leave of a person of his age†? Whatever has the air of an eternal farewell must hurt a feeling heart.

† This relates to the Archbishop of Arles, who was then near 80 years old.

The catches which Mr. de Coulanges has made are extremely pretty: your house must have been prodigiously thronged to stifle his vivacity; in a word, so large a company at one time is too much, it wearies even me with all my love for popularity. I thank heaven you will not be in the way to ruin yourself this winter either at Aix, nor in your own house; how does my soul exult at the near approaching prospect of your return! In short, I should be too happy, were it not for the allay I find in my son's illness. The Coadjutor is set out, he has settled the manner of Mr. de Vendôme's interview with Mr. de Grignan*; it is sufficient to know, once for all, how things are to be; and when the King's orders are followed, there is no room for complaint. I shall finish my letter this evening, when I will inform you of all that I have heard and seen.

Well then, I have seen my good friends. Madame de la Fayette spent the whole afternoon with me; she finds great relief from the asses milk: Madame de Schomberg does not appear to have put my nose out of joint there, altho' there is a great intercourse of words between these two new friends. Do you not remember what we used to remark about the pleasure there is in shewing our trinkets to new acquaintance? Nothing could be more just than this observation; every thing appears new, every thing is an object of admiration, and praises are lavished out of number.

* Meaning the ceremonial that was to be observed between the Duke de Vendôme and the Count of Grignan, on the arrival of the former to take upon him the Government of Provence.

There

There is a great deal more of self-love in these kind of friendships than of esteem or confidence, so that upon the whole I do not think I am cast by like an old rag yet.

Montgobert has wrote me wonders about your re-union; henceforth I hardly think it possible that you should be separated. I knew the bottom of her heart, and where all your little bickerings would end. It seems then that you have made that same visit, and that nothing could hinder you from tempting the edge of these precipices; you may say what you please to me about fields and bowling-greens, but the Chevalier has told me how he was in a like occasion obliged to drag you by force out of your litter, to prevent you from being dashed in pieces; for my part, I cannot conceive the pleasure you take in running these hazards, or how you can so coolly contemplate these horrible gulphs that threaten to swallow you up every instant. What can induce you, child, to pique yourself upon shewing more intrepidity than the Chevalier? Do you think that your many aimable accomplishments stand in need of this additional qualification? The gay and rhyming turn of Mr. de Coulanges must certainly be of great service in these kind of expeditions. Madame de Coulanges writes me a great many obliging things on your account as well as my own.

Madame de la Fayette, Madame de Lavardin, the Marchioness d'Huxelles, and Madame de Bagnols, have furnished me with a whole budget full of news. Mademoiselle d'Amelot was married last Sunday without a creature knowing any thing of it, to one Mr. de Vaubecourt, a

spick and span new suiter; he is of a good family, tho' but of a middling fortune; his mother is of the house of Chalons. It has happened very well, to prevent us being teased this winter, as we were the last, with her amorous sighings.

Adieu, my dear child, we are all busied in preparing for your reception. Here now is another instance of the unseasonable things that absence and distance make us say and do; you tell me you wish that I could meet you here, thinking that I am to pass my winter in Brittany; in a word, my dear, I was once very near doing so; but after all, here I am, here I am, my dear child, to my no small satisfaction.



LETTER DLXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, All-Saints, 5 November, 1680.

MADAME de Coulanges acquaints me, that she has received one of the most diverting and pretty letters imaginable from you, which, she says, she never can read over often enough, and yet you have the face to write me word by the very same post, that your style is as flat and insipid as that lady's who wrote to Mr. de Coulanges in my letter. Upon my word, you deserve to be heartily scolded when you talk in this manner.

If you would have me speak to you without disguise, and agreeable to the dictates of sound reason, Mr. de Grignan ought to make you set off without waiting till he has finished the ceremony of receiving Mr. de Vendôme; this delay will carry you far into the month of January, the thought of which is insupportable. Mr. de Vendôme stays at every place; he will be above a week at Orleans, he will spend five or six days in hunting with the Archbishop of Lyons; so that you see the staying to receive him, the conducting him to Aix, and the bringing him back with you again, will take up an infinite deal of time; and it will be shewing very little regard to your health or safety, to put off your journey in this manner. This is what my attention to every thing that relates to your ease and welfare prompts me to write to you. I wish that this piece of advice may prove as needless, and come as unseasonably, as do most of those things that pass between two persons at such a distance as we are from each other; and that, when this letter comes to hand, you may already have fixed the day of your departure in like manner as your letter expresses. Your apprehensions that I should pass the winter in Brittany, found me snug in Paris.

After embracing you most cordially, my dear Count, I must tell you that the above is addressed to your lordship, which tenderness and affection ought to influence you with the same cares and apprehensions as these which I experience.

It is said that Madame de Schomberg is going to quit us, and take up her residence in

in the Fauxbourg of St. Germain. It is really very diverting to see the strict observations that are made on the new connection between this lady and Madame de la Fayette. The Abbé Têtu will have it that this intimacy will put Madame de Coulanges out of all temper; and he is still so much her admirer, as to be pleased with the thought. Brancas is just distracted about it, and talks the oddest things in life. If Madame de Coulanges should avenge herself on them all by contracting a friendship and intimacy with you, it would have the most diverting effect imaginable: as for me, I shall take great care of what I have already got, that I may write something to reward me for my past services. Corbignelli and I are both of opinion that nothing more is wanting to compleat this connection but friendship.

Adieu, my dearest child, it grows late. I have been overwhelmed with visits. You always laugh at my forecast; but I cannot bear to drive off things to the last.

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### LETTER DLXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 6 Nov. 1680.

**STILL**, my dear, I must advise you to begin that journey as soon as it is possible; for if you stay till Mr. de Grignan has discharged all

all his duties, you must lay aside all thoughts of coming this winter. Methinks the regard he has for you should not suffer him to think of exposing you to the cold weather and bad roads, at least a conduct of that kind would be unaccountable to me.

Certainly you are born never to taste a moment's ease or pleasure, since I find you passing so slightly over your stay in Paris, to dwell upon your return to Grignan. I believe few persons, besides yourself, would perplex themselves with such thoughts amidst the hurry of a removal. For my part, my dear child, I cannot imagine what should make you think of leaving Paris, when once you are here; you will be lodged as much at your ease as you can desire, your bail will be renewed for four years, your expences certain; and if you (Mr. de Grignan, I should say) have an inclination to avoid the very extraordinary ones you have long been at, this is the only place in the world where you may recruit. As for Aix, it is a bottomless gulph for money. I fancy that by this time you are somewhat cured of your Grignan oeconomy, where you was to live for little or nothing; for it seems it was nothing, nothing at all to keep four or five tables; and to have the house open to all comers and goers, with provisions for man and beast; a thing that nobody in the world but yourselves thinks of doing now-a-days: in short, say what you please, that same caravanfera of your's appears to me to teem with ruin; the very idea of it turns my head, and I am in hopes that Paris will prove your resting-place, or, at least, that you will stay so long as to make a comparison between your expences here and in Provence, before you think

of



of returning thither; but, in the first place, let me see you here; that is the first object of my wishes.

Mademoiselle de Meri is fixed in a lodging to her mind, she will have all the time she can desire to settle herself, nothing need hurry her; she sees plainly that I am much better pleased to have her here, while she can be so, than to have farther to go in search of her; it was in order to bring her to a determination, that I wrote to you; for when people are irresolute, they are in a perpetual inability of doing what they would. She is much better than she was, she can now speak herself, and hear what others say to her; we have a good deal of chat together in an evening. Ah, my dear child, how easy is it for any one to live with me! I am to be led any-where by a little complaisance and sociality, or even the appearance of confidence; and really I believe that no person in the world is more susceptible of the pleasures of a friendly correspondence than myself. I wish you could only be a witness how smoothly every thing goes, when my cousin has a mind they should do so: she hinted to me the other day, that she had heard in general what was my son's ailment, and that she should not be displeased to know further particulars about it. I took this curiosity obliging in her, and therefore gave her a full account of all that affair, besides other anecdotes that I thought might be amusing to her: now this is what I call living together as one should do; but when we cannot say a thing but what is answered abruptly, when one endeavours to behave in the most civil manner, and yet nothing will please, when every subject one treats upon is heard with a sullen silence, and the most public circumstances are concealed under

under the air of mysteries, when positive facts are treated as falsehoods and calumnies, and that distrust, ill-nature, and even aversion, is manifested in every look and word; I must confess that it gives my poor heart great uneasiness, and I cannot help resenting such behaviour a little. I cannot accustom myself to these crabbed ways; and if it was only for the sake of the nearness of blood, a more mild treatment might be expected. And yet, my dear child, I have often experienced these disagreeable and unkind circumstances; I should not mention this to you, but that the case is altered to my great satisfaction; and I declare to you, that, if this change does but last, it will give me no small joy; yes, I repeat it, no small joy: you may believe me when I *say* a thing, for I am no great *sayer*. In a word, I am quite satisfied, as indeed a very small matter will satisfy me; and, upon occasion, I can accept of a suspension of ill-treatment as a mark of friendship: by what I have said you may judge how pleased I should be, if civility, good-nature, an out-side of confidence, an intercourse of chit-chat, and all the rest that should subsist between two persons who know life, could once more be revived between her and me through your means. I perceive that there is a settled coolness and indifference between Mr. de la Garde and you, by his affecting never to visit you; but when he knows you are surrounded by company, and by his inviting every one of your family but yourself to his house, I am a good deal chagrined at this separation, after your having been upon such a friendly and agreeable footing together; but we will reserve this subject for another opportunity.

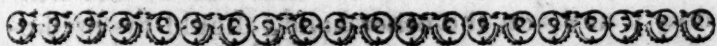
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I have just received your letter of the 30th of October, I have nothing farther to say than that I am here; I took the resolution of departing at once, and I have no reason to repent my having done so. You talk to me of the country as a desert or place of retirement; agreed, if you mean Livri, or the Rocks; but for Grignan, you must excuse me if I can never be brought to allow it that name; it is a court, it is one perpetual scene of hurry, and Paris will be a retreat to you.

Methinks Mr. de Vendôme is resolved to weary out your patience, for he thinks of nothing but diverting himself at every place he comes to. You do not know as yet whether Mr. de Grignan's presence will be necessary at the first meeting of the states; it may be so: but I know one thing for certain, which is, that if he should be obliged to attend them, you have no business to wait for him, notwithstanding the difference there may be between travelling alone and having him for a conductor; for this is not to be put in competition with the hazard you run of having bad weather, and still worse roads. We have almost compleated your apartment, so that in a very few days you will be the only piece of furniture wanting there.

Adieu, my dearest girl, make haste to set out, leave all disagreeable reflections behind you; consider that I recommend to you all that is dear to me in this world, and let this reflection engage you to take particular care of yourself, if nothing else will. The Chevalier is at Versailles, the Dauphin and the Dauphiness are still ill with

a fever, and the Menins must do their duty. All your friends have been very kind to me. I do not know any news, if I was at the Rocks I should have enough to send you. The devotion of Mademoiselle de Grignan appears to me of a nature not to be kept to herself without communication; she will make the Abbé de la Vergne happy in her confidence.



\* LETTER DLXVIII.

To the Same.

*Paris, Friday, 8 November, 1680.*

**I** Make a very different use of my guests \* from what you imagine. I am sorry I did not set you right on this subject before I left the Rocks. I am really very well pleased with having them here: I pass almost an hour and an half every evening in conversing with Mademoiselle de Meri, and she proves so much at her ease, and with so visible a persuasion that she need not hurry herself, as gives me no small pleasure, especially as she seems to be perfectly well satisfied, though she dares not say as much. It is really an amusing study to observe the different manners of different people. As to the Chevalier, I am delighted with

\* Mademoiselle de Meri and Monsieur le Chevalier de Grignan were both lodged in the Hotel de Carnavalet, on the arrival of Madame de Sévigné at Paris.



his return from Versailles ; we chatted together two hours last night in Mademoiselle de Meri's apartment : he cannot as yet quit his young master, who continues very ill. The English physician has promised the King in so positive a manner, even on the forfeiture of his life, to cure his Highness in four days, both of his vomiting and his fever, that, if he should fail, I believe, in my conscience, they would throw him out of the window ; and, on the other hand, should his prediction prove as true in this case, as they have done in most others that he has had the management of, I shall be for having a temple erected to him as a second Esculapius. It is a pity that Moliere is dead, he would make an excellent scene of Daquin \*, who is put at his wit's end, at not being possessed of this panacea, and at the rest of the tribe, who cannot tell what to make of the experiments, the secrets, and the almost divine prognostications of this little foreigner. The King will have him make up his medicines in his presence, and trusts the management of the Prince wholly in his hands. The Dauphiness is already much better ; and yesterday the Count de Grammont saluted Daquin with the following stanza,

*Talbot est vainqueur du trépas,  
Daquin ne lui résiste pas ;  
La Dauphine est convalescente,  
Que chacun chante, &c. †*

\* First Physician to the King.

† Daquin no longer can withstand

Talbot, victorious over death ;

The Princess owns his healing hand :

Let each one sing with joyful breath, &c.

This is a parody on the chorus in the first scene of the fifth act of the opera of *Alceste*.

Nothing

Nothing is talked of at court but this. The Chevalier told me a thousand other things equally amusing, which are not writeable. I do assure you that it is no little advantage to be placed in those regions, it gives birth to a certain familiarity, and to some favourable opportunities that exist not elsewhere.

I know nothing of what you intended to do; but it is easy to see that Mr. de Vendôme is in no hurry to get to Provence; he is still at Orleans taking the diversion of stag-hunting; he intends to make some stay at Lyons; and if Mr. de Grignan must be present at the assembly, and that you are to wait till he sends you back your coach, you will find yourself in the middle of the month of January; and how can any one that has the least love or regard for you bear the thoughts of your travelling at that season of the year! I am of opinion that health is to be preferred to every other consideration; we are still under dreadful apprehensions concerning your intended return in the month of May; nothing but a courier can support such fatigues: I am certain that you will find it utterly impossible to be done; but then, why either write or think such things? Besides it would be a ruinous piece of folly to be at such an expence for furnishing an house, for purchasing cloaths, and a thousand other articles, only for a stay of three months: one would fancy that you took a delight in spoiling the most agreeable journey in the world, and the most for the advantage of your family. If you should ask me, what business it is of mine? I should answer you, that it is my business; absolutely mine; and that, interested

interested as I am in every thing that concerns you, whatever hurts you must hurt me likewise. Can you, my dear, entertain a thought of wasting your substance at Aix, or your health at Grignan, this winter? Indeed these things are ever uppermost with me; and however great is the desire I have of seeing and embracing you, yet I would advise you not to come hither, if you intend to be gone again in an instant; this would be flying in the face of common sense.

We shall see if my son's illness will have worked any change in his dispositions; I much doubt it, especially in those relating to his place, which seem deeply rooted in his mind for some time past. All sublunary events are the sport of providence; I observe its workings, and am continually meditating on our state of dependance, and the diversity of our opinions; but the sentiments of the heart are more deeply engraven, at least I judge so by my own; the affection which I feel for you, my dearest creature, seems to me mixed with my very blood, and blended with the very marrow of my bones; it is a part of my essence, I truly speak what I feel\*.

\* At this time Madame de Sévigné had left her daughter Madame de Grignan, and gone to the Rocks, which gave occasion to a continuance of their correspondence.

LETTER



\* L E T T E R D L X I X .

*Madame de Sévigné to the Marquis de Sévigné, her Son.*

*Paris, August 5, 1684.*

**W**HILE I wait for letters from you, I must needs relate to you a very diverting piece of history. You remember how much you regretted the loss of Mademoiselle de \* \* \*, and how unfortunate you thought yourself in having missed her for a wife. Your best friends you know were in concert to destroy your happiness; Madame de Lavardin, and Madame de Fayette had done you an irreparable injury! A young lady of noble birth, great beauty, and a fine fortune, surely a man must be doomed to die a beggar, to let such an opportunity escape him, and when it was in his power too. The Marquis de \* \* \* was not such a fool, he has made his fortune, and is nobly settled. Certainly, one must be born under a cursed planet to miss such a match! Observe only her conduct: it is an example to all married women. You remember all this, I suppose, my dear son, and that till you married Mademoiselle de Mauron \*, you was ready to hang yourself, for not having contracted this other alli-

\* Jane Marguerite de Bréhand and de Mauron, to which the young Marquis de Sévigné was married on the 3th of February in this year.



ance, which appeared so captivating; but now to the sequel of the story.

All those amiable qualities of this lady's youth, which made Madame de la Fayette say, she would not have her for a wife to her son if she could bring him millions, were, it seems, entirely devoted to the service of religion; God was the only object of her affection, and all her designs centered on heaven alone; but as every thing in this super-excellent creature was in extremes, her poor head could not support the excess of zeal and fervent devotion with which it was filled, and, in order to satisfy the overflowings of her holy heart, she resolved to take example from the writings of the Fathers of the Desert, and the Lives of Female Penitents, and became herself the heroine of those admirable histories: full of this idea, she left her house and family, about a fortnight ago, and taking with her only five or six pistoles, and a little foot-boy, she set off about four o'clock in the morning, and taking a post-chaise at the skirts of the town, drove away for Rouen, miserably fatigued and dirtied; when she got there, she bargained for a passage in a ship bound for the Indies; that is the place, it seems, to which God has called her; that is the spot where she is to lead a life of penitence and humiliation; and the map of that country has presented her with a certain desirable abode, where she proposes to pass the rest of her days in sack-cloth and ashes: the Abbot Zozimus\* is to visit her, and ad-

\* A famous hermit of the 6th century, who used to come every Good Friday to give the sacrament to St. Mary the Egyptian, in a desert cave on the banks of the river Jordan. See the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.

minister to her the last holy rites before she expires. Perfectly satisfied that heaven inspired her with this resolution, she discharges her foot-boy, and sends him home to his own country, while she waits with great impatience the departure of the ship; being lost, in a holy oblivion, to husband, father, mother, children, and all her friends and relations, she incessantly cries out with the poet:

*Courage my heart! disdain a woman's weakness\*.*

And now the moment arrives in which her prayers are heard, the happy moment that is to separate her for ever from her native land, and all that others, less holy than herself, account dear and desirable; strictly observant of the gospel-law, she leaves them all, to follow Christ.

In the mean time, however, her family missing her, and finding that she did not return to dinner, sent to all the churches in the neighbourhood, but without being able to hear any thing of her; they supposed that she would return at night; no such thing! They begin now to be uneasy, the servants are all questioned, they can give no account of her further than that she had taken her foot-boy with her: she must certainly be at her country-house; no: where is it possible she can be gone to? A messenger is dispatched to the curate of a neighbouring parish, on whom she used frequently to attend; the curate returns for answer, that he had not had the direction of her conscience for a considerable time. It seems that, being a sober good

\* *C, a courage mon cœur, point de faiblesse humaine.*

kind of man, and having observed her full of very odd conceits about religion, he would have nothing to do with her. Every one was now at a loss what to think; two, three, four days, a week passed, still no news; at length her friends bethought themselves of sending to search the sea-ports, when by mere accident they found her out at Rouen, just on the point of setting out for Dieppe, and from thence to take a trip to the other hemisphere. They secure her person, and bring her back again, a little disconcerted at being disappointed of her journey, but still repeating,

*I went, I came, impelled by mighty love\*.*

A lady to whom she had imparted her design, revealed the whole to her family, who, in despair at the folly of their relation, would fain have concealed this curious anecdote from her husband, who happened to be absent from Paris at that time, and who would have been better pleased at a piece of gallantry in his aimable consort, than such a ridiculous expedition as this. The husband's mother comes to Madame Lavaradin, and, bathed in tears, relates the whole story, while the latter can hardly refrain from laughing in her face; and the next time she saw my daughter, asked her if she could forgive her for having been the instrument of preventing Mr. de Sévigné from marrying this pretty creature? Madame de la Fayette was also in her turn acquainted with this tragical incident, who told me the whole with a great deal of merriment, and de-

\* *J'allois, j'étois, l'amour a sur moi tant d'empire.*

fires me to ask you if you are still angry with her, as she insists upon it that she cannot be sorry that you was not married to a mad woman.

We dare not mention a word of this to Mademoiselle de Grignan\*, who for some time past has been ruminating upon a pilgrimage, and, as a preparative thereto, has lately observed a profound silence to every creature round her. Well, what think you of this curious tale? Has it not afforded you some amusement? Farewel, my dear son. Marshal de Schomberg is in his march to Germany, at the head of 25,000 men, in order to hasten the Emperor's signing†. The gazette will inform you of the rest. Adieu.

\* Sister to the Count de Grignan. See several letters in the latter part of the 7th vol.

† This relates to the truce which was on the point of being concluded at Ratisbon, and was actually published at Paris, the 5th October following.



## LETTER DLXX.

The Same,

*To the Countess of Grignan.*

*Etampes, Wednesday, 13 September, 1684.*

**Y**OU will easily conceive, my dearest girl, that, in spite of all your excellent counsels, your poor mother must have found herself, on leaving you, in the midst of thorns that will wound her, whatever care she may take



to guard against them. I did not dare to think, I was afraid to utter a word; in short, I found myself in such a situation as was hardly supportable. I have strictly adhered to the regimen you prescribed me, I did all I could: I am at present in very good health, I have eat, drank, and slept well, I have nursed the *Worthy*; and, in short, here I am at your service.

I have recalled to my mind the several motives that urged me to this journey, which upon recollection (for I assure you that the grief for your absence had almost driven them out of my head) I cannot blame myself for having undertaken it, so that I shall even make use of this as an expedient to comfort me in my separation from you; but that comfort is yet very distant, and I am in a perpetual inquietude to join you again: do not forget what you said to me on that head.

I am delighted with the thought of your being at Versailles; I fancy the diversity of objects there will have contributed to calm your mind more than what I met with at Chartres, and this place have been able to do mine. I earnestly hope your journey will prove successful; but, indeed, how can any one refuse you what you ask? I recommend your health to your care; it is matter of no small consolation to me to have left you with such a charming pair of cheeks, preserve them, my dearest, for my sake. But in short, I dare not dwell upon this subject any longer, I feel it hurts me! Is it not an unaccountable thing for a thinking being not to dare to think? I am very much obliged to the lovely eyes of  
 Mademoi-

Mademoiselle d'Alerac, for the tears \* they shed on my account; but what thanks can repay you, my dearest child, for the tender sensibility, the affectionate sorrow you shewed on that occasion? But I must pass over this subject as quick as possible. To conclude then, believe my heart to be wholly your's, that every thing yields place to you therein, who reign unrivalled mistress of the soft domaine.

\* Frances Julia Adhémar de Grignan, youngest daughter of the Count de Grignan, by his former wife Angelica Clara of Angennes.



LETTER DLXXI.

To the Same.

*Amboise, Saturday night, 16 Sept. 1684.*

I HAVE not had a single letter from you, my dear, as yet, tho' it is the thing in the world I the most ardently long for. I have wrote to you both from Etampes and Orleans \*; I sent you the excuse of the good Abbé du Pile, who was indeed the only agreeable companion we had; for, as to Madame du Pont †, whom I have mentioned to you, and who is possessed of a great share of merit and understanding, my uncle

\* This letter here mentioned was not to be found among the original MSS.

† She was a *Dossuet*, and a cousin german to the Bishop of Meaux.

the Abbé was so frightened at her, that he could hardly live. So you must know I went this morning to pay her a visit, she certainly chats to perfection; I gave her a hint of what hindered me from inviting her to take part of our vessel, which she received in a very pretty manner: for my part, finding that there was no such thing as suffering conversation to languish in her company, I was very much afraid that I should be obliged to furnish my quota of wit, for thirteen or fourteen hours together, in my coach, which is now turned to a boat\*, and I had much rather have nobody to speak to, than to be under such a restraint.

I found Monsieur de Duras still at Orleans; he is going to his seat of Duras; so the good Abbé and I set out perfectly alone, in order to get to St. Dié to lye, not being able to reach Blois. The wind was rather against us, by which means we got in by the most beautiful moon-light that can be conceived; but there was no lodging to be had, all the apartments being taken up by Monsieur the Duke and his train; however, his gentleman hearing my name, very civilly made me an offer of his chamber, for which I shall take care that Madame de la Fayette shall return him thanks. This morning we set forwards again, and I stopt at Blois, to inquire if, by chance, any letters were there from you, but no such thing. We would not pass Amboise in our way hither. We met with a little storm, which would be poetical enough, had we not struck too roughly against this shore; however, we excused this in considera-

\* Madame de Sévigné's coach was at that time in a boat upon the river Loire;

tion of the extreme fine weather we had yesterday, and the forepart of this. To-morrow we shall go to church, and then pursue our voyage about six leagues beyond Tours; for I am desirous of avoiding the compliments and entertainments that we must expect from Dangeau. When one has a *Worthy* in company, one is not so very moveable.

Well, my dear, what think you of this insipid narrative? Do you think it is possible for any one to be better acquainted than yourself with what passes on the Loire? Such is my lot, however, that I have at present nothing but these trifles to entertain you with, and yet I know they please you, so long as they give you to understand your poor mama is in good health, and not devoured with the vapours; yes, my dear, to my shame I say it, I live and breath in your absence, instead of being lost in uneasiness for having left you, in that very place where it was so natural for me to have remained with you; but the reason! the reason! that's enough.

Do you not intend to go to Livri? I desire you will; and think of me there, but with that fortitude and philosophy which govern all your thoughts and actions; as for me, I cannot avail myself of that kind of rule, and nothing can prevent me from wishing to see, and to be always present with you, and to be sensibly affected with that mutual affection we have for each other. Methinks I am losing many hour of life that ought to be precious to me, but I protest to you, that my affairs make me very uneasy. Oh! my dear, how much I shall stand in need of you to keep up my spirits and give me courage.



My principal occupation on my journey is, to admire this noble river. I have read the life of Madame de Montmorenci, and think that it is worth the reading. Farewel, my dear countess, I want to make my letter short, and I cannot. You see what trifles this is filled with. Send a kind remembrance to Monsieur and Madame de Coulanges, and compliments to the Chartres family, if any of them are there. Has my little Marquis forgotten me? How are you with the Coadjutor, the Chevalier, and Mademoiselle de Grignan? Indeed, my dear, I shall expect a whole packet of news from you, especially concerning yourself, and your health, and your journey to Versailles. I hope at least to hear from you at Angers.



• L E T T E R DLXXII.

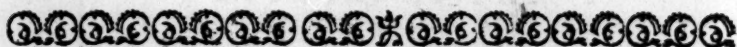
To the Same.

*Saumur, Monday Evening, 18 Sept. 1684.*

WE have had the wind continually contrary since I left you, my dear. We make no way but by the help of our oars, which has stopped me a day longer than I expected, so that we shall not get to Angers till to-morrow, which just compleats the week since our departure. From that good town you may expect to hear from me. I intend to see my niece De Buffi to-morrow before I set out.

I have had no other amusement on my passage, as I observed to you before, but contemplating the beauties of the country on each side of us. The *Worthy* and I have been for fifteen hours together confined to the inside of the coach, placed commodiously enough indeed in the vessel. I have read, indeed, sometimes, but then I have been always absent; and at other times I have counted the waves, for want of something else to do.

Reflect, my dear countess, that your poor mother writes to you every instant; that she teazes you, from a confidence in your affection, with the dull relation of a still duller journey; and that she has been a whole week without having read a single line from you. All our stages have been disconcerted by the obstinacy of the wind, so that you will readily believe I shall be glad to get into Angers to-morrow, where I expect to receive letters from you. You will as readily believe too, my dear, that having had my thoughts wholly occupied about you, I must have called to mind the numberless reasons I have to love you, and to be persuaded of a reciprocal tenderness on your part. This subject has warmed my heart, and banished from thence many uneasy reflections, which would otherwise have forced their way during our tedious and solitary passage, for, as you have seen, it has pleased providence that we have not had a soul to bear us company. Much might be said upon the pleasure or restraint that would have been the consequence of a different situation. Our *Worthy*, however, seems very well contented. He is in perfect health, as well as your humble servant, and we both embrace you most cordially.



## L E T T E R DLXXXIII.

To the Same.

*Angers, Wednesday, 20 September, 1684.*

**I** Arrived yesterday afternoon about five o'clock at the bridge of Cé, after having been to church in the morning, and paid a visit to my niece De Buffi. Just as I came to the foot of this bridge, I saw a coach and six, which I took to be my son Sévigné's, and so it proved; but instead of him, I found the Abbé Charier, who was come to receive me, and make my son's excuses, who is a little indisposed at the Rocks. I assure you I am far from being displeased with this same Abbé; he has something of the Grignan air about him, and what makes him infinitely more acceptable to me, than any other person in the world, that could have come to meet me, was, his putting into my hands a letter from you, my sweet girl. I confess to you, that his presence was not the least restraint to me, and that on the receipt of that dear packet I gave loose to a flood of tears that would infallibly have choaked me, had I kept them in. Ah! how well-judged a preparative was this! You seem quite displeased with your Versailles journey; you say you found a great many doors shut; I think you was in the right to send your letter.

They talk here that the court does not set out so soon as was intended. Perhaps you may have an opportunity of seeing Mr. de Louvois  
once

once more. God will direct every thing for the best. You are too sensible how much I interest myself in all that concerns you, to neglect giving me speedy advice how things turn out. ☉

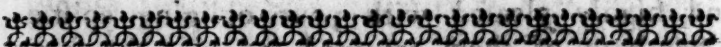
I have just opened your letter to your brother. How tenderly do you express yourself therein concerning me! How shall I ever be able to make a return to so much affection? I readily agree that you should make a merit with him of my quitting you, but heaven knows to what it was owing, and that nothing but the dreadful situation of my affairs could have made me determine to tear myself from you. There is a certain time in life when honour and conscience require us to use our best endeavours to recruit our shattered forces, and not to drive things to extremity. This is the real state of the case with me; this it is that made the good *Worthy* venture upon a journey at this time of the year, which cannot but have greatly fatigued him.

Yesterday I paid a visit to the pious bishop of Angers, where I saw his brother the Abbé Arnauld, still the fast friend of our family, and highly pleased with your obliging epistle. They both of them returned my visit the same evening; and who should come in just after them, but Madame de Vefins, Madame de Varennes, and Madame d'Assé. You will see the latter very soon. Adieu, my dearest countess. I am going to dine with the good bishop.



\* *Angers, Thursday, 21 September.*

I am just going to set out, my dear child, for the Rocks, and cannot leave this place without a word or two, by way of bidding you farewell. I dined to-day, as I told you, with the good bishop, whose exemplary piety, and attention to the duties of his calling, are almost beyond conception. He is now upon the verge of ninety, and yet he undergoes fatigues that no man could sustain, that was not, like him, filled with the love of God and his fellow creatures. I have had a whole hour's conversation with him, during which I found him a prodigy, and I am overjoyed that I have had this opportunity of beholding him with my own eyes. I spent the greatest part of yesterday's afternoon between Roncerai and the Visitation. These good ladies Madame de Vefins, d'Assé, and Varennes, never quitted me an instant. They gave me a grand collation, and here they are now going to take their leave of me, together with the good prelate, and his brother the Abbé. We are not so polite as this at Paris. I hope, my love, I shall find a letter from you at the Rocks.



\* L E T T E R DLXXIV.

*Monsieur De Sévigné, to the Same.*

*The Rocks, Sunday, 24 September, 1684.*

I Judge, my dear sister, of your concern, by the joy I at present feel, in having  
my

my mother and the *Worthy* with me, who, notwithstanding the fatigue of their journey, are both in very good health. I readily conceive how uneasy you must be in their absence; but if you should be under any doubt concerning the health of my mother, you may at least rest assured, that nothing shall be wanting on my part to preserve a health so precious to us both. I pardon you, my dear, for envying my present happiness; but it was no more than justice that our mother should make us equal sharers in that pleasure which her presence always bestows; do not hate me, therefore, on this account, but let my example teach you to love your rivals. This is a disposition Madame de Coulanges always acknowledged me to have, and that I have always felt in my heart towards you.

This morning my uncle put into my hands the pretty present sent me from my princess\*. He, and I, and the Abbé Charier, have been all this morning trying to open this pretty bottle, and at length we have had so much success, as to stir the cork, tho' not without a hard trial of skill; but as we relieve each other by turns, it now comes in and out very easily. My mother has shewn us another way of using it, which is very convenient, for the Hungary-water now comes out of itself without the trouble of opening the bottle.

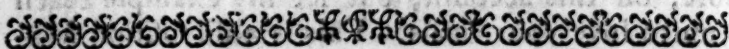
Farewel, my lovely and ever-loved sister; a thousand thanks to you my adorable princess; pray tell her that I am weary with waiting

\* Mademoiselle d'Alerac.

for her being a viscountess \*, and that I shall be perfectly happy to hear of that change. I offer up my most devout prayers to Saint Grignan †, and embrace you from the bottom of my heart.

\* Alluding to a marriage which was then on foot, between Mademoiselle d'Alerac, with Gafard-Vicomte of Polignac; but this match being afterwards broken off, Monsieur de Polignac married Maria-Armande de Rambures, in 1688; and Madame d'Alerac, in 1689, espoused Henry-Emanuel Hurault, Marquis of Vibraie.

† See the Letter of the 25th September, Vol. VII.



### \* LETTER DLXXV.

*Madame de Sévigné, to the Countess de Grignan.*

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 27 Sept. 1684.*

AT length, my dear child, I have three of your letters together. I cannot but admire how fortunately this falls out. At the very time when I had no other consolation, this gives new life. It is a fresh recruit of spirits, an absolute food for the mind, which, without it, must have sunk beneath its malady, as nothing else could have been food proper for it. All that you write me is so tender and so kind, that I should never forgive myself, could I read your letters with dry eyes, any more than I should be able to pass this winter without your company. But now let us have a little discourse about Versailles.

You

You must know I am not at all pleased with the silence from a certain quarter. I can never believe that they would refuse so just a demand in this season of bounties; you know all your friends desired you to try this expedient; how great then will be your pleasure, if, by your industry and solicitations, you should at length obtain the favour you request? It could never come at a better time, for I believe (and this is an addition to my many other anxieties) that your affairs are in a terrible confusion. For my part, I am convinced, that I could never have retrieved mine, had I waited six months longer. When once things are pushed to a certain extremity, they become, in a manner, irreparable. You was one of the first to agree with me in this opinion; that is my comfort whenever I think of the subject.

The life we lead here is dull enough, and yet I do not think that I should be pleased with much more bustle. My son has been troubled with those ugly pains of his. My daughter-in-law has very few moments of gaiety, for she is devoured with the vapours; she changes her face twenty times a day\*, nothing is ever to her mind; she is excessively delicate; she scarce ever stirs out of doors; she is always complaining of the cold, and by nine o'clock at night her spirits are quite exhausted; the days are too long for her, and the great desire she has to indulge her inclination for

\* The French ladies make no scruple of painting before any body, and it is, with them, as great a requisite of dress as clean linen.

laziness,



laziness, makes her leave me quite at liberty, that I may do the same by her, with which I assure you I am not at all offended. I appear perfect mistress of the house, tho' I never intermeddle in any of the affairs, but am served and waited on, as it were by enchantment. I take my walks alone, but I dare not trust myself by twilight, for fear of bursting into tears and lamentations; darkness, therefore, is very bad for me in my present situation; could I get a little more reflection, the fear of offending you would make me give up my melancholy amusements, which I avow at present for the sake of my health, which you recommend so much to my care; in short, you are still at the bottom of all. It is not my fault, my dear, that all the world does not know the tender and solid affection you have for me. I should be an ungrateful creature should I make the least doubt of it; and if Madame de Montchevreuil thought that the concern I feel is greater than your's, it can only be, because few daughters love their mothers as you do me.

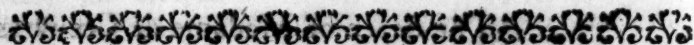
You have done me a sensible pleasure in speaking about Versailles. The place Madame Maintenon holds has not, nor ever will have its fellow in the world. You certainly can never have neglected to get Madame de Montchevreuil to rub up her memory a little. I do not want any assistance for procuring Mr. de Coulanges' chair; let me alone; I coin money here. I am glad that our match is not likely to be still delayed; and that the Coadjutor and you will be allied by my two cheeks; by the way, pray take care of your's, my dear, I mean of your health; do not over-fatigue yourself; have pity on me, for, believe me, I could  
with

with great difficulty bear with more uneasiness than at present falls to my share.

The death of Madame de Cœuvres was a very unexpected event, and that of the Chevalier d'Humieres still more so. How that same Death traverses the world, cutting down every one where he comes ! I am at present in perfect good health, and I am cautious how I attempt to make myself better by medicines. We expect the Capuchins every minute. The poor little woman here is really to be pitied ! There is nothing in this house that gives much joy, nor any thing to occasion much uneasiness. Well, so much the better ; I would have it so. Both of them send a thousand compliments to you.

Corbinelli is enchanted with the kindness you shew him. I really begin to envy the man. See what a great service my friendship is of to any one ! The *Worthy*, who desires me to say many soft things to you in his name, still goes on with his calculations, and still preserves his health. Farewel, my dear ; what can I say to you that can any way express what I feel for you ? I thank you for the news-papers. You think of every thing, and are in every thing truly adorable. You talk of my letters ; I wish you would but remark what strokes there are in your own, and how much you say in a single line. You lose a great deal by not keeping copies of them to read at your leisure. Let me trouble you with a compliment or two for Mr. de Cœuvres, and for Madame de Mouci on her heroic action, which makes us fear for her health. You must not fail to write a handsome letter to Mr. de Lamoignon  
in

in your name and mine, on the concern he must have felt at seeing his friend expire in his arms.



## LETTER DLXXXVI.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 1 October, 1684.*

**T**HOUGH my letter is dated Sunday, yet I write it on Saturday night. It is now ten o'clock, every one is gone to rest; and this is an hour in which I am more particularly your's than when surrounded by company; not that I am under any restraint on that account, for I know how to get rid of them, and then I indulge myself with a solitary walk; and say what you please, my dear, if it was not for that liberty, I should be indeed greatly oppressed. I feel it as necessary to think of you with attention, as I do to see you again; and if the thorns which I mentioned to you in a former letter from Etampes were a little less piercing, the time which I thus devote to you should be dedicated to my health, as it now is to the easing of my heart. I told you a melancholy truth, namely, that you left me in a situation where every thought was like a sword's point. I did not know how to secure myself from them, for one is very defenceless when our own thoughts prove daggers to our repose. But to drop this melancholy theme, my dear, I now write to you with security and peace of mind. It is now a  
week

week since I came here, so there is so much time gone. The Abbé Charier is the only person with whom I can discourse about you; he kindly listens to me while I tell him how much I love you. I know not whom I shall have to supply his place when he is gone. He enters into all my sentiments, is filled with admiration at your's, and cannot conceive how it should happen that you are not perfectly comforted for this separation by all the gayeties with which you are surrounded at Versailles.

You regret my absence, you say, as a sick man does lost health; indeed, my dear, I cannot join with you in your remark, for you felt more pleasure in my five or six visits a day, and in the whole of our agreeable correspondence, than any one can in the enjoyment of a good state of health; therefore, I do think you have not done justice to the force of your affection. As for me, my dear, I must freely confess to you, that not a moment passed without my being perfectly sensible of the joy of being in your company. Whenever I came from church, whenever I came from town, whenever I came from the *Worthy*, all was joy, all was pleasure. In a word, I declare to you from the bottom of my heart, that all the time I passed with you, never brought the least diminution to the warmth of my sentiments. This is the real truth. Do you not wonder whither my pen has hurried me? But I am alone, my dear; my heart is melted within me; but this effusion of its contents will probably find you in a different disposition; but no matter, I know my dear countess will have goodness enough to bear with my weakness. Is it possible that I can have wrote so much without



without having yet said a word of Mademoiselle de Grignan? I am more concerned than surpris'd at this elopement\*. She always look'd upon us as so many people she wanted to get rid of; nothing that we could say would please her; she has fairly got rid, however, of father Moret's† yoke; but not to say a word of her intention to the Coadjutor! It is very strange! Has she taken Cocole with her? What is become of Champagne‡, who went with her thither?

I am very much afraid our match will be broke off by those motives of interest you have mentioned to me. It shall not be by my consent, however; and if every thing must be sacrificed to the prospect of a ducal coronet that may never come, poor Mademoiselle d'Alerac is likely to be the dupe, or the victim of this management. I heartily wish the Coadjutor good health for several reasons, but this holds the second rank. What are become of the little birds that took their flight to Paris? I shall expect to hear the result of all this from you.

Indeed, my dear child, I pity you, to have your house to rebuild; what an unseasonable expence! You are loaded with vexations that seem made for no one else; but perhaps I feel the force of them more sensibly than you do. If it pleas'd providence to relieve you, it might soon be done, by giving good inclinations to him from

\* Mademoiselle de Grignan had thrown herself into a convent of the Barnardines at Gif, without communicating her design to any one of her family.

† A famous father of the oratory.

‡ Two of Mademoiselle de Grignan's servants.

whom

whom you have requested assistance. You have given me no small concern in acquainting me that the Grand-Master \* has broke one of his ribs: his hunting match has turned as much to his disadvantage, as the church-going of the poor Marchioness de Cœuvres did to her's.

There are several parts of your letter that I should wish to be sent to Fontevraud, were they but interlarded with encomiums upon the Abbé Têtu. I must tell you that it is wrong of you to say so much of my letters; I cannot think what you mean by it. It is true indeed, that while I was on my passage, not being able to procure any other books, I amused myself with that funeral oration, which I thought very well adapted, and was of opinion that the preacher could not have said any thing better of Madame de Richlieu †, for Mr. de Turenne was out of the question. I wrote my sentiments upon this head in a line or two to Madame de la Fayette; and the Abbé Têtu, whose self-love will never let him be blind to his own advantage, has turned the affair quite to Fontevraud ‡; but, for the future, my dear, you have nothing to do but speak and silence me. I should not be in the least surpris'd at it, if it was to your understanding I address'd myself, but it is to your affection, which answers me much better.

You conclude your letter in a most charming and uncommon manner, "You are to

\* The Duke de Lude.

† Who died on the 28 May 1684.

‡ See Letter of the 6 May, Vol. vii.

“me like health;” that is to say, heightener of all pleasures. After such thoughts, never talk of my trifles! I know myself a little, child, and am not so easily led astray by vanity.

Here I left off last night; to-day is Sunday, and I must dispatch my packet; but the return of day-light, and of noise, have not the least impaired the sentiments which I experienced in night and stillness. My son is just set out for Rennes, in order to be assured whether or no there is any danger in his pains. His wife is about me, and understands perfectly well what I mean by not seeing her to-day. I passed this forenoon in my wood with my Abbé Charier. I find that she is going thither presently, and so I return to my chamber and pen. All this, you will say, is very convenient. She has a great many good qualities, as far as I know; but these being as yet the early days of our acquaintance, I find myself disposed only to give her a negative commendation; she is neither *this* nor *that*; in time, perhaps, I may say she is *that*. She sends you a great many pretty turned compliments, and wishes to be in your good graces, but without being very anxious on the subject; so that she is——not very anxious. This is all I can make out at present, she does not speak the Breton dialect, nor has she the accent of Rennes.

I very much approve of putting nothing else about my cypher, but the words Madame de Sévigné, that is sufficient; I shall not be confounded with another of the same name, I believe, so long as I live; and I shall be very glad of this little

little amusement \*. Mr. de Coulanges has already taken care of the gilding of the frame, so that the expence will be very trifling, and I shall not want your assistance.

Good God! my dear, what delightful weather it is! and how I pity you for not being at Livri since I have inspired you with my fondness for the country! you know, however, that it never equalled that of being with you. My greatest passion for Livri lasted but two days, if you was not there. But God has disposed of my destiny, and, in a few days, I shall have more of a country life than I would chuse.

I shall place to my account all the goodness you shew to Corbinelli. He is no bad companion, any more than Madame de la Fayette. Keep close to them two, and judge whether I have lost my taste. I have not as yet seen either the princess or Marbeuf. The former is wrapt up in her devotions, and the latter is in the height of grief for the death of a young niece of seventeen years of age, handsome, rich, and of a good family. I saw her the last time I was in the country, when she was a perfect child. It seems she was grown very agreeable, and used frequently to visit between this place and Vitré. She was taken with hysterics, and died in three days, notwithstanding she was bled every day in the arm. This catastrophe is much of a piece with that of Madame de Cœuvres.

\* By this Madame de Sévigné means an easy chair which she was then working in tapestry, for a present to Mr. de Coulanges.



Farewel, my dear loved girl. Give the young rhetorician \* a kiss for me, whom I defy, with all his rhetoric, to persuade me that I do not love him dearly.

\* The Marquis de Grignan, her grandson,



## L E T T E R DLXXVII.

To the same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 4 October, 1684.*

I was sure you would not be long before you made a visit to Gif; it was a very natural step: and I expect from you a full account of this journey, and the result of the retreat, as also of our marriage, and of the obstinacy of Mr. de Montausier, who insists in making such unheard-of demands. In short, whatever passes in the Hotel of Carnavalet, is more or less interesting to me, according to the share you have in it. You express yourself with so much tenderness on the pain my absence gives you, that tho' the knowledge of your suffering must always affect me with concern; yet I had easier bear with this pain, than be without such convincing proofs of your love.

I have been the means of ridding your brother of a great deal of very indifferent company since I have come here, which gives me

no small pleasure. You know I am not very tractable towards impertinents, and for want of the happiness which you possess of being perfectly absent in such company, I lose all patience, and am sometimes downright rude. Heaven be praised we are quiet at present, and I have leisure to pursue my reading; I am going to begin a book which Madame de Vins has recommended to my perusal, it is called *A History of the Reformation in England*. I write letters, and receive them, and am almost every day occupied with you. I receive your letters on Monday, I answer them on Wednesday, as I do those which arrive on Friday the Sunday following; so that I am not so sensible of the distance between the posts. I walk a great deal, not only on account of the weather being so extremely fine, but because I feel beforehand the horrors of the approaching winter, and am therefore willing to make the most of the present sunshine heaven sends us. Do you not intend to spend a few days at Livri, my dear? I should think the Chevalier would be glad to rest himself there a little after his late course; and as the Coadjutor is perfectly cured, methinks every thing invites you to take that jaunt. If you should be in need of a few weeks mourning, my dear, by way of change of dress, I can help you to it. Mr. de Montmoron \* died about four days ago, at his own house, of a fit of the apoplexy; there is one added to the number of happy souls; however, we must not presume to judge.

I have seen the Princess, who perfectly understands what I must feel; she expresses

\* He was of the Sévigné family.

great affection both for you and me, and every day that goes over her head drinks fourteen or fifteen large dishes of tea; she prepares it in the same manner as you do: first, letting the leaves infuse, and then filling the cup full of boiling water; she says it has been the panacea of all her disorders; and very gravely assured me that the Landgrave\*, her nephew, drank forty dishes every morning, fasting; "Thirty perhaps, Madame", says I; oh no! "I assure you, he drank forty, not a cup less; and this has raised him from the brink "of the grave." After this, you know, I was obliged to swallow it. I told her that I was very glad to find Europe in good health, by her being out of mourning. She said I judged very right, but that she was apprehensive she must be obliged to change her dress soon for her sister the Electress†. I am perfectly well acquainted by this time with all the family-affairs in Germany; but in spite of her oddities, it must be confessed that she is a good creature.

I have sent you a letter inclosed for Mr. de Pomponne; I am rejoiced he has got this abbey! in what a pretty manner it was given! at the time he was in Normandy, never dreaming of any such a thing. *Non ti l'invidio, non, ma piango il mio*‡, that is as much as to say, must my dear child never obtain the least favour? Do you not think that your affairs hold the chief place in my heart? I am certain, I think of them with more concern

\* of Hesse-Cassel

† Charlotte of Hesse-Cassel, wife to Charles Louis Count Palatine of the Rhine, and Elector of the Empire.

‡ 'Tis not thy destiny I envy, but 'tis my own that I lament.

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. 99

than you yourself do; but make the most of that courage which enables you to bear every frown of fortune; and, if you would make my life happy, continue to love me. For my part, I shall still cherish that affection which is so pleasingly painful.



LETTER DLXXVIII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 8 October, 1684.*

ALAS! my dear child, how concerned am I to hear that you have been ill; let me tell you, a swelling in the throat is a very serious matter, it might very easily take the name of quinsy. You put this off with an air of raillery, to prevent my being frightened; but the heat of your blood, which has occasioned you so many sufferings, will not suffer me to smile, especially when it attacks your breast. The journey to Gif must have greatly fatigued you; do you remember that which you made to Lambesc with the Princess of Monaco? I do not believe, indeed, you have been dangerously ill; but then the foggy air of St. Bernard's vallies, the gloom of that retreat, the tears you have shed, the fatigues you have undergone, and the loss of rest, has had such an effect on you, that you have been obliged to be bled twice in eight and forty hours. Compose yourself, my dear; let me beseech you, keep yourself quiet, and do not think



of writing volumes, nor trouble yourself with answering the endless scowls that I send you from this distant part of the world ; for if you should act otherwise, I might, for the future, confine myself to write only a page in folio to you.

*To the Chevalier DE GRIGNAN.*

I am infinitely obliged to you for taking the pen out of my daughter's hand ; notwithstanding her raillery, I beseech you to hinder her from writing any more for these two or three days, and to be obliging enough to save her that trouble by becoming her amanuensis to me. Among other things, I beg you will answer me every particular relating to the holy maid, and let me know what could occasion this sudden impatience in her ; as also what Mr. de Montausier and Mademoiselle d'Alerac are doing, and what effect this elopement will have upon our marriage ; you will oblige me greatly by chatting with me a little upon these heads.

But above all things, I recommend to you the care of my daughter's health ; trust her not when she is for sitting up late at night, and rising early in a morning, and perpetually swallowing oceans of tea and coffee. I assure you, Sir, such a way of living is very hurtful to one whose blood is so apt to be enflamed as her's is. Remember only the condition we saw her in some time ago, and do not suffer her to abuse the return of her health and beauty. She is subject to a pain in her side, which often gives me great uneasiness ; for I never can be persuaded that such pains afflict people without there being some latent

tent malady. Put her in mind of a certain herb-  
tea, to which she ought to shew some regard, if  
it is only out of gratitude. Take her to Livri, to  
rest herself a little, and let me have the satisfac-  
tion of knowing, that, by keeping constantly with  
her, you are that impelling force which will pre-  
vent her from doing ill.

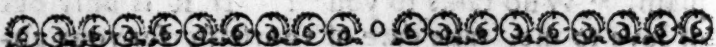
*To Madame DE GRIGNAN.*

This may be a little tiresome to  
you, my dear; but I shall say to you, if you com-  
plain, "Who talks to you \*?" If it is only out  
of love to me, take care of yourself; for your ab-  
sence, and the thought of your being in an ill state  
of health, is too much for me to bear at once.  
I am sure I shall not find those cheeks so  
blooming as when I left them; nothing can  
change a person sooner than the pains you com-  
plain of, and two such great and unmerciful bleed-  
ings; in short, I can write upon no other subject.  
I am very anxious to hear about you; but if you  
do not make use of the Chevalier, as your ama-  
nensis for some time, I will not write you ano-  
ther line.

I expect my son back from Rennes,  
to-day; I have had a few conversations with his  
wife lately, and really she appears to be a good  
rational kind of body, she enters into our affairs  
from their fountain-head in a better manner than  
any other person I know in Brittany. It is no  
small matter, in my opinion, not to find a pettish  
or contrary temper, but one who understands  
things in their proper light.

\* See Letter June 9.

Indeed, child, I cannot comply with your desire of my being always in company, it is absolutely necessary to devote certain hours to you; and the liberty of doing so, tho' attended with some pangs, is still agreeable. Yet I must confess, that, however I occupy myself, the days will still appear long in this place, and more so than usual; as for the month of September, I really thought it had taken me half of the year to itself; and I cannot reconcile to my imagination my having been only a fortnight here.



## LETTER CDLXXIX.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 5 November, 1684.*

**Y**ES, my dear, I do make you a promise that I will not terrify myself with apprehensions on account of your disorder; and I conjure you not to conceal from me the real state of your health; but, surely, that third bleeding was too much, after the two former. I cannot help thinking that you have not been properly treated; I thought Alliot had been your physician, but I find there are more than one who claim that merit: and Mr. de Coulanges writes me word, that it was Céron who had that honour, who, it seems, has been sent for, post, to visit Madame de Chaulnes, who is at death's door, and that it was he who ordered you those three bleedings, your disorder

order being very pressing and violent. It rests with you to tell me the real truth, for I am quite at a loss what to think of the different accounts I have read; according to you, the pain of your breast was trifling, and the danger all over when they applied the remedy. Whatever may be in this, my dear, make yourself easy and get well as soon as possible; for this purpose stick to your herb-tea, which, notwithstanding all its disagreeableness, is the true specific for your complaints; and if you should find writing troublesome to you, get a friend to write for you, only just put a line at the top and bottom, for I must see your handwriting in some part, or it is all over with me; but it will give me on the contrary great pleasure to reflect, that, stretched at your ease upon your couch, you chat with me, without confining yourself to a posture for two hours together that must be very hurtful to your breast. As for our healths here, I will tell you very sincerely how they stand: in the first place, as to myself, I am perfectly well; I walk abroad when the weather is fine; I avoid both fogs and night-airs; and my son, who has a watchful eye over me, fetches me in upon the least appearance of either. My daughter-in-law never stirs out, she has gone thro' a course of bathings and drinking the waters, which has greatly fatigued her, without the least advantage as yet; so that we are neither in a condition or humour to take very long walks. At Livri, indeed, one is tempted to do it sometimes, for in the heat of summer it is very agreeable to take a few turns by moonlight.

The good Abbé is still troubled with his flatulences, but he is used to them; the



Capuchins, who, you know, are the universal physicians of this country, have prescribed him certain medicines which they promise him will do wonders ; but they are very tedious in their operation, and he still continues to suffer. As for me, I am quite rid of my vapours, I believe they only came because I made much of them ; and as they have found of late that I despise them, they have taken their leave of me, to go and frighten some other fools like myself. This now is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, relating to the situations of all here.

That in which you represent Mademoiselle d'Alerac, is inimitably described ; it enlivens the heart like a glass of brisk Champagne. It is no wonder that she begins to have a feeling in her present circumstances ; that of Mr. de Polignac must certainly be much more sensible, as gratitude in him is joined with love. I think the articles will be better settled at Livri than at Mr. de Montausier's house ; but, by the way, I cannot account for the behaviour of Mr. de Polignac in his first appearance ; what meant that serious air and short visit ? There is something extraordinary in this air of coolness, when it might be expected that he should have explained himself with a tender and passionate warmth upon his long absence and silence ! I cannot conceive how, after such a beginning, he could bring himself off so handsomely as you say he did. But, indeed, you have painted the whole of that scene in a most lively manner, for which I return you many thanks, my dear, as you know how much I interest myself in this affair.

The

The good Abbé likewise returns his thanks to Mr. du Pleffis, for the honour he has done our canal, whose reputation has been not a little heightened by the accident you mentioned: it may be compared to a sudden and vigorous execution of justice, after it has lain for some time neglected; every one sees, trembles, and believes; after this little kind of shipwreck, drought, mud, and frogs may do their worst; we shall always be able to boast a canal in which Mr. du Pleffis had like to be drowned.

We have had a fortnight, or more, of very dreary weather, but there is no judging of the season in this country; very probably you have had it warm and fine at Fontainebleau, while we have been buried in damps and fogs; however, we must take these things as they happen, for we cannot have the direction of them. I am very sorry that the Chevalier's rheumatism has attacked him so early. Vichi has not done him any great service this year; I wish our Capuchins may have better success.

I imagine you are at Paris, and will not be long before you are at Fontainebleau; but, my dear, do you propose to make the journey in one day? Consider, you must take care of your health, let that be the prevalent consideration; for, in truth, my health and life are wrapped up in it. What do you think I have got by the death of Madame de Luines\*? Why? the heart-ach, and a thousand melancholy re-

\* Anne de Rohan, she died the 29th October, in the 25th year of her age.

flections, which there is no warding off. What must we do not to die? Young, handsome, rich, and perfectly happy, she paid the tribute of humanity last year, by a violent illness, which brought her to death's door; and yet, in less than another year, she dies outright. Here is room for infinite meditation! Mr. de Chaulnes is greatly afflicted at this event; say some thing to him upon it; Madame de Chaulnes has a great friendship for me, she has been extremely ill; it would not be right to seem to neglect them.

Farewel, my dearest; Madame de la Fayette writes me word that Madame de Coulanges is charmed with your wit and person.



\* L E T T E R DLXXX.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 15 November, 1684.*

I HAVE received a letter from Marshal d'Estrade, in which he relates so heartily and exactly all the questions you put to him concerning me, and I perceive in them so strong an affection for all that relates to me, that I confess I cannot read his letter without tears; I ask your pardon for this weakness, it is passed; but, indeed, I was not prepared for this new proof of the affection of one so dear to me. In this, my dear, you have an account of the most remarkable adventures

ventures that have befallen me since I wrote to you last.

You tell me that I do not give myself up entirely to you. Alas! my dear child, what is the occasion of it? I could easily tell you, had I an inclination to debase my letter with a detail of the reasons that obliged me to quit you, of the disagreeable situation of things in this part of the world, of the sums that are owing me, and the delays in the payment of them, and how all my affairs must have gone to ruin had I not taken this resolution in time. You know very well that I put it off for two years with pleasure, but, my dear, still there must be a time for beginning; I can hardly call my fortune my own, unless I continue to satisfy every just demand, and preserve that character at my death which I have maintained all my life. This, this, my dear, is the cruel cause that tears me from you, and is this a subject to entertain you with? But I have the pleasing hope of seeing you soon again; in the mean time, I am here with my son, who is very happy to see me spend a part of what he owes me; this reflection makes me sleep sound, and enables me to bear the loss of all that his farmers are indebted to me, from whom, I dare say, I shall never get a shilling. I am persuaded that you feel all the force of these facts, which, however, will soon be at an end, and then I shall be restored to my former condition, however: I could not forbear making you acquainted with the whole in the bitterness of my heart, because I find some relief in talking with my dear girl, whose tenderness is not to be equalled.



I hardly think it worth while to speak of my health, which is every thing I could wish, and I love Mr. de Coulanges for having shewn you my letter, as it will have cured you of your imaginations, for the style one takes in writing to him resembles joy and health. What my son wrote you concerning the Capuchins, was to put you upon your guard in case of any sudden alarm; but that is as yet to come, and in the hands of providence, for hitherto our machines have not been much disordered, but your's, my dear, has not been so regular, for you have had a severe fit of illness.

The weather still continues terrible; the post can hardly pass the roads, so that we must no longer think of receiving our packets regularly. I had very little to say of the journey to Fouesnel; it was as dreary as possible. I just mentioned it to Coulanges. I find that your connections with his wife still go on very pleasingly, that is, as it should be; her husband writes like an angel. It seems he has let you into the mad story of the fair *Cuverdan*, but we do not know whether it was truth or fiction, for he says she was daughter of *Casut*, which *Casut* was a folly of his childhood, with which he was so infected as to get a sound whipping while a boy, his parents being apprehensive that it would turn his head with Madame de Sanzie: however that might be, the *Cuverdan* of this county comes here to-morrow, she has been these three days on a visit to the princefs.

Do you remember, my dear, the rule of Corbinelli, that we should never judge  
without

without having first heard both sides? There are many things to be said pro and con, but in short matters were so situated, that there was a necessity for my son's breaking with Madame de Tisé, and abandoning the only connection he has with Mr. de Mauron \*, or to break off abruptly with the princess: he held out as long as he could, in order to avoid being guilty of such a piece of rudeness; but at length he was obliged to do the one or the other, and he preferred the satisfaction of being upon a good footing with his new relations, and the calls of gratitude and interest, to the glory of having followed the precautions of the princess, whose head, like those of all other Germans, was full of them. You will say that Madame de Tisé was very ridiculous to exact such a resolve from her nephew, that she does not behave like a woman who knows the world, that her conduct is absurd and inconsistent; all this is very true, but there was no altering her.

Good God! what a medley of stuff is here. I did not intend to say half so much on this head, but let us now come to Mr. de la Trouffe, who is making large strides on the road to fortune. Do you know the qualities of a simple machine called a lever? I think I have been such an one to him; do you think I am over-vain in saying so? This makes me interest myself particularly in the transactions of his life, which have hitherto procured him a great deal of honour, and not less favour. I shall not fail to write to him; in the mean time make my com-

\* Father-in law to Mr. de Sévigné, and brother to Mad. de Tisé.

pliments on this subject to Mademoiselle de Méri.  
I desire you not to forget it.

I have nothing farther to say of the indifference of Madame de Coulanges, only that I think she has taken the best and most proper method. You form a right judgment of the success that is likely to attend Madame de la Fayette's intercession. Never did any person do so many good offices without stirring out of their place. She has a great share of merit, and is held in high esteem; these two articles you share in common with her, but not her good fortune; yet I much question whether all the expences and services of Mr. de Grignan will do more than you. It is not without great concern that I see you and him so cramped. You'll do extremely well to go to Versailles when the court goes there; but, my dear girl, I cannot too often caution you to take care of the waters, for we have strange stories told here of the damage done in your part of the world by the late inundations.

You certainly speak the truth when you tell me that the affection you have for me does you harm, and it will be but doing me justice to think that I feel the same to a greater degree than I would chuse to do; for, in short, when one loves to a certain degree, one fears every thing, foresees every thing, and figures to one's-self whatever is possible to happen, though most likely never to happen at all. Sometimes the distance between the posts appears insupportable to me, and when I receive a letter from you at last, I open it with fear and trembling; there is no denying that all this does one harm: therefore, my dear girl,

let

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. III.

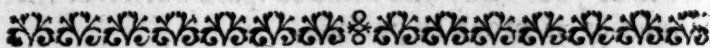
let it be your study and mine to spare ourselves these anxieties as much as possible.

It is now above a fortnight since we have seen the face of any of our walks or gardens, so dreadful has the weather been, so that I have given up all thoughts of walking, and keep close to my chamber, where I amuse myself very well with working Coulanges's chair. I had not been informed of the marriage of Mademoiselle de Courtin, nor do I care much about it. I have received some very agreeable remembrances from Mr. de Lamoignon; he regrets my absence, and says he is greatly chagrined that he did not shew me the speech he made before the assembly of the states last year. I have desired him to shew it to you, as a person who, I said, was, in one respect, more worthy of it than myself. Say something to him about it, he will be pleased with your notice.

Madame de Marbeuf is come here, she is really a good creature; but nevertheless, my dear, I desire you to believe I could do very well without her. Liberty is to me preferable to any company; however, she sends you a thousand compliments, to which you will do well to answer by a line or two in your next, and so no more of *Guerdan*.

L E T.





LETTER DLXXXI.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 26 Nov. 1684.*

SO much the worse for you, child, if you do not read your letters over, your laziness robs you of a great pleasure, which is not one of the least of the ills it may occasion you; for my part, I read them over and over again; they make all my joy, and all my sorrow, and all my occupation, so that you are the center and cause of all. I shall begin this letter with you.

Is it possible that what you tell me of yourself can be true, that when you was speaking to the king you was like a person beside yourself, and lost, to use your own expression, in the blaze of majesty, that you knew not what you said, nor could recollect any of your ideas? Never, never, will I believe that my loved daughter, always so remarkable for her wit, and happy presence of mind, should have been in such a condition. But, after all, I must confess, that, from what his majesty said to you, "that he would do something for Mr. de Grignan;" I did not by any means conceive that he had a regard only to the great expence Mr. de Grignan has lately incurred; no, the king's answer appeared to me rather as if he had said, "Madam, the gratification you ask of me is a trifle, I will do something more for Grignan;"

nan ;" meaning the affair of the survivorship, which would be a capital point gained for your family ; so that I had no thoughts of the little present in question, and I wrote to you upon that head, which you will find in my last letters. It rests with you, my dear, to set me right, and I beg you will do so, for I do not love to take things by the wrong end.

Madame de la Fayette has wrote me word that you appeared like a little angel at court, that you spoke some time to the king, and that it was thought you was soliciting a pension for your husband. I returned for answer, making flight of the matter, " that I believed it was to beseech his majesty to consider Mr. de Grignan, for the great expence he was obliged to be at in Provence," and that was all.

You relate in an inimitable manner the story of Mr. de Villequier and his mother-in-law. There seems no danger of her proving a Phœdra to him ; had you read that part of your letter over you would readily have conceived the manner in which it struck me upon reading it. It is not altogether unlike the story of Joconde and the chambermaid, yawning with fatigue at her long waiting ; it is a master-piece of wit. I think Mad. d' Aumont's behaviour very commendable, and such as ought to make her husband perfectly easy.

Here is great news from Savoy. I can never believe the king can withhold his pity and assistance from the young Princess of Baden, when she represents to him the condition of her mother

mother abandoned by all her children. I do not believe she will set out till her mother is gone this same mother indeed has such a deal of fire about her, that it is difficult to persuade one's-self that she is not still in the prime of her youth. The princess of Tarentum intends to receive her at Vitré. As for Madame de Marbeuf, she is one of her old acquaintance, they have spent whole winters together in supping and playing at the palace of Soissons; you may easily judge how readily they will renew this at Rennes. I have told my son the story of the Chevalier de Soisson's engagement, we could neither of us have believed the eyes of a grandmother retained still so much power. I do not think it worth mentioning to you the raising of the siege of Buda; it is a piece of news hardly of consequence enough to give a place to in my letters. I fancy the Dauphiness, however, will take the pains to be angry that her brother has exposed himself in this manner, and has acquitted himself so well in this expedition, that it is a pity such an elector should be obliged to return from it.

Our *Worthy* is very ill with one of those bad colds and coughs which you have seen him afflicted with. He is in his little closet. We take better care of him here than would be done at Paris. As for my daughter-in-law, she has gone thro' all the hot and cold regimen of the Capuchins, without being affected either one way or the other by them. When the weather is fine, as it has been for these last three days, I venture out about two o'clock, and walk backwards and forwards before the gardeners, who are lopping the trees, but without stopping to look at them; and  
after

after I have enjoyed all the heat of the sun, I return back to the house, leaving the setting day to those of a more hardy constitution. In this manner do I manage myself to please you; nay, very often I do not stir out of the house at all. Coulanges's chair, a few books that my son reads admirably well, and now and then a little conversation, will compose the whole of my occupation during the winter, for I shall exactly follow your orders in all points.

My son understands perfectly well what *Wednesday* means\*. To say the truth, we should be very dull without him; and he without us; but he manages matters so well, that there is generally a party of ombre in my apartment, and at intervals we read, and make comments on what we read; but you know what sort of a place the Rocks is. We have read a folio volume thro' in little more than a week. Among others we have been engaged in that of Mr. de Nicole; as also the lives of the fathers of the desert, and the history of the reformation in England; in short, those who are happy enough to have a taste for this kind of amusement, need never want wherewithal to pass their time.

\* This was one of Madame de Sévigné's post-days.



\*\*\*\*\*

# LETTER DLXXXII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 29 Nov. 1684*

I See you, my dear, and pity your situation; you have an inclination to write to me, you have a great many things to say, but Madame de Lavardin, without troubling her head about it, dines two hours sooner than ordinary, purposely to have time enough to make you a visit; then comes in Madame de Lamoignon, and after her Mr. de Lamoignon; this last, indeed, was enough to make you forget writing at all, but at length time spins on, the hour is come, the post will set off, and I must write to my mother, or else every thing will be overset indeed; and so it would, my dear, for I must hear from you either by hook or by crook, as they say here, nor must a post pass without that satisfaction, which is meat, drink, and cloathing to me; but if you should happen another time to be taken unawares, as was the case last Saturday, do as you say, scribble only two or three lines without coming to any conclusion, and I shall perfectly well understand what it means; besides, I make it my earnest request to you, my dear, that you will not fatigue yourself with answering my long letters paragraph by paragraph, consider that mine is nothing but the chit-chat of a person who has not any part of her time taken up with visits or other affairs, as you necessarily have,

have, so that it is entertainment to me, and was it not out of pure compassion for you, I should not know when to end; let me then gossip my fill without being at the pains to make a regular reply, but only inform me of your own affairs and of those for whom you have a love and regard, and such like matters. However, I must put you in mind that you have not yet set me right in regard to the affair at Versailles; I beg you will not let me be longer in the dark on that subject. Has Madame de la Fayette said any thing of it to you as yet? Inform me likewise what is become of that *Guadiana*; methinks she is a long time before she makes her appearance again?

You have done me a sensible pleasure by driving the princess Olympia out of the hotel of Carnavalet. I do not like that woman; I have a much greater regard for a pretty personage, who would do extremely well to act the *duchess of Grignan*? It is by this title that Coulanges always mentions you in his letters with all the seriousness imaginable, I have laughed at it very heartily, and I wish it may have the same effect on you. He is still mad after that poor *Cuverdan*, but it is an unaccountable folly, for which he must one day answer, for the poor woman says all the good things in the world of him; there is not a woman in Brittany who has a better heart or nobler sentiments. There now! he falls a laughing at me. No, no, I am no such dupe, says he, not I, I can see as clear as another person, but I know every one has a failing, and her's is but a trifle in comparison of those which attack the nobler parts. Well, after all, my dear, I am a sad creature, and I cannot help laughing myself

myself at Coulanges's folly, but I will not make him any answer, lest some ill should befall me as a punishment for my ingratitude, for indeed nothing can equal the affection and friendship that both Mr. de Coulanges and his wife have always shewn towards me, or their attention to every thing that concerns me or mine, and the letters of both are no small pleasure to me, though in different ways.

I went yesterday to dine with the princess; I left the good Marbeuf behind me. We had a deal of talk about the news that's stirring. The princess of Baden came through Angers, and is highly delighted with that tour; she has an excellent cook with her, but seldom makes any use of him but upon particular occasions. You inquired of me the other day about a certain person, I now inquire of you about Corbinelli; it is above a fortnight since I have seen a scrap of his writing, and it was above three weeks that I had not seen it before. He makes a bad use of irregularity. Is his nephew returned? I advise him to write to him.

You may, without the least scruple, read the letter for Mad. de Vins: I'll take your word for your not having read it yet: she owed me an answer, but she writes to me that not having seen you, and consequently having nothing to write concerning you, she did not think proper to trouble me with what related only to herself. When you write to her, pray make my compliments, and endeavour to get the same sent as far as Pomponne. I am very uneasy about the Dauphin's

phin's disorder, the Chevalier writes me word that he is very well.

Farewel, my lovely and beloved, I cannot figure to myself aught beyond that affection which I have for you, it is a terra incognita to me.



\*L E T T E R DLXXXIII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 13 Dec. 1684.*

THEY may say what they will here, I never can be persuaded that it was but three months yesterday, since I bid you farewel, my charming Countess, which a heart bursting with grief, and eyes filled with tears ; no, I can never believe it, I speak sincerely. I have lost all knowledge of time since our separation, every thing is turned topsy turvy in my poor brain, and I am like one lost in a wood.

Twelve thousand franks would have been no bad thing to have passed the winter with in your company, but they would not have been so easily come at from such a distance. As it is, I have made shift to manage that sum, by eating and drinking out part of what my son owes me, and laying by the whole of my income, in the mean time, for the payment of my own debts there was no other way left but this, tho' indeed



indeed it has cost my poor heart dear, and more so than I chuse to tell you.

Never, sure, was any thing more happily imagined than that which you wrote me concerning the great beauty who was to make her appearance at Versailles, perfectly new, perfectly pure, and indebted to nature only for her charms, and who, it was believed, would eclipse all the other beauties. I assure you my curiosity was greatly raised, and I expected that some new beauty was really to be brought to court and introduced, when behold, all on a sudden it turned out to be a River\*, that, notwithstanding the regularity of its proceedings hitherto, has at length suffered itself to be drawn aside by an army of 40,000 men, no less a number being sufficient to make a bed for it. Methinks this is a present which Madame de Maintenon has made to the king, as the thing in the world that he desired most. I was not acquainted with the name of this river; but though it is not very famous, yet the inhabitants of its banks cannot fail of being surprized at its absence. It is an event that was not much to be apprehended in the common course of things, and our modern geographers will be as much to seek as those who would not have been able to have found out the mountains of Ossa and Pelion, after Mercury removed them, which obliged that deity to set them

\* The river Eure, a part of whose waters were cut off a little below Chartres (at Pontgoin) with a design to bring them over land by an aqueduct to Maintenon, and from thence to Versailles. But the war of 1688, together with the sickness caused by opening the grounds, occasioned the work to be discontinued, after it had been carried on as far as the camp of Maintenon, and it was never after resumed.

down in their place again \*; but I imagine his Majesty will not have so much complaisance for these gentlemen.

In my opinion Mr. de Montausier will be upon but indifferent terms with the family of Polignac, after having, by his obstinacy, occasioned the breaking off a marriage, which was so well concerted, and had already gone so far †. Mr. de la Garde wrote to me about this affair, and seems to think as you do, that it is very wrong to behave thus to persons of their rank and distinction, and who are so much esteemed by Mademoiselle d'Alerac and Mr. de Grignan. I fancy this is the opinion of most people. If you see Madame de Lavardin you will do right to talk to her plainly upon this subject. As for me, who cannot see any thing like a duke at hand to comfort Mademoiselle d'Alerac for her present loss; I cannot help thinking that her fortune will prove no temptation to any one, after what has passed; and as for what she expects from her sister, it is a mere chimæra, made use of only to answer the present purpose of disappointing her of so suitable and good a match. But all this time Mr. de Montausier seems to give himself very little concern about seeing his niece well settled, or about the bad consequences this affair may have ‡; but I assure you I am a good deal uneasy about it.

\* See the *Contemplator*, one of Lucian's dialogues.

† See Letter DXXIV.

‡ Mademoiselle d'Alerac was niece to Julia de Angennes, Duchess of Montausier.

You always acquaint me with deaths that surprise me. Simiane was always subject to the gravel, he thought himself perfectly cured of that complaint, and now see how it has turned out! You have an apostrophe to the soul of my poor father, to inform you of the reason of the patience of certain courtiers; would to heaven he may not have suffered for being of a very different disposition! You still persist in fatiguing yourself to answer every article of my letters: good God! cannot you let me have my own way, I have nothing else to do. You laugh at the sacred freedom established between Corbinelli and me, but I assure you it is a very good thing, and our friendship is never the less real and solid for it. I do not say that you should not write at all, but only that you should not hurt yourself by writing; for example, though I do not write to my friend to-day, yet I may not have the less regard for him; he has sent me some very merry anecdotes, I will repay him on Saturday night; in the mean time, I shall make free with his patience, from a certainty that I may do so.

Let me know what the Chevalier thinks about Polignac; pray heaven our sentiments may be alike on this head. I see you in your dress at Versailles, but let me see my dear daughter for once at the poor Duchess of Chaulnes's, who sympathises with her in that same pain of the side.

We have had tolerable fine weather these two days past, and we have made the most of it, but in a running way. I defy the rheumatism to catch me, I love open weather; but when

when it is so very open as to spill any of its contents on our head, that is to say, when it rains or begins to grow dark, I am ready to cry. I begin to love the little good woman who is in the hands of the Capuchins. Adieu, my dear, I embrace you from the bottom of a sincerely affectionate heart.



• L E T T E R DLXXXIV.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Friday, 15 December, 1684.*

**H**ERE is little Beaulieu on the point of setting out to play the man of consequence this winter at Versailles: happy creature! in six days time he will see the Countess of Grignan. The thought awakens all my sorrows, and cuts me to the heart. He brings you the three deeds you have already seen, and which are exactly the same with the copy that Mr. de Ormesson sent me. If you have a mind to see them completely signed and sealed by my son, you need only open the packet that contains them, and seal it up again, and give it to Beaulieu together with my letters, which he will take care to deliver according to their directions. Your brother executed these deeds with a very obliging readiness, for he is not infected with the manners of this country. He was highly pleased to have in his possession again the note for 80,000 francs, which was a debt of the *Worby's* to me, and for which my son had en-

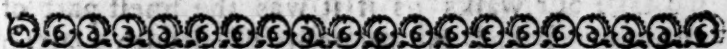


gaged in order for your security. He always intended to pay it; however, he was not a little pleased that the Abbé gave him up his note again, and that he has made you a present of another paper, of which Sévigné had not the least knowledge, though it related to part of his own fortune; but, for that very reason, you will say he was the less sensible of the loss. He has thanked the good Abbé as one should thank a benefactor, who has by a well-timed stroke of liberality retrieved our affairs when on their last legs, for such was your brother's case; and had it not been for this seasonable assistance, he must have absolutely been a bankrupt. However, now the worst is over, and things have turned out very happily, both for you and for the ease of my life, for it cannot but afford me a sensible pleasure that when I die I shall leave no matter of contest between my most intimate friends and children; this was the darling object I had in view, and it is with joy I see I have not lost all the fruits of my journey.

I send you herewith, my dear, the most precious thing in my possession, which is a pint of my paregoric balsam. I could not get a greater quantity, the Capuchins being quite out. It is by the help of this balsam that they cured the little body of her nephritic complaints. They desire that you will put ten or twelve drops of it in spirit of wine made pretty warm, and rub it well into your side, by which means it will penetrate to the seat of the disorder; they pretend that it is a sovereign remedy in these cases, as also for all complaints of the breast. I wish from the bottom of my soul that you had no occasion to make use of it; but as that is too great a happiness to be

be expected, I conjure you to try it. Your health often occasions me many uneasy moments; I am impatient to know how that same colick, which is not a colick, fares. Let me know an account of what relates to you as often as possible.

Talk not to me of happy new years, my dear; happy would the returning year be, indeed, were I present with you; but as I am doomed to live at a distance from you, the thought of it only brings a return of uneasiness, and fills my eyes with tears, whether I will or will not.



\* L E T T E R DLXXXV.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 27 December, 1684.*

WITHOUT examining your definitions or proofs of friendship and affection, my dear, I am persuaded that I find them all naturally within myself; therefore I shall not hesitate to give that precious balsam to the best part of a whole, of which I am but a fragment. Had I any reason to suppose or foresee that it would be of any use to myself, the present would have some additional degree of merit; but as the case stands with me now, I honestly declare to you, my dear, that I have no nephritic complaint whatever, nor had I ever any of consequence enough

to demand the aid of this noble remedy; keep it then carefully by you, and wholly for your own use.

I readily conceive the flutter that the unexpected appearance of Beaulieu must have put you into; I am no stranger to these kind of surprises. He has acquainted you with my prudent conduct; to say the truth, my dear, your mother formerly was not reckoned a fool; but I do not know how it is, there is a certain time of life when we are apt to take a ridiculous care of ourselves, and this is my case at present. The weather is extremely fine and warm just now, and we take our walks as if it was the finest part of autumn. I had my thoughts filled with you on Christmas eve, I saw you in idea at that same convent, and we were employed at our devotions in our chapel. Your brother has taken quite a serious, not to say religious, turn; he occupies himself in reading works of devotion, he seems affected by them. The time will come when he may think himself happy to have spent some part of his time in these Christian avocations; for, oh how dreadful a thing is death to the mind bereft of all support in that terrible hour of trial! His wife seems to partake in those sentiments; in short, I am the most wicked of the family, but not so bad as to be quite a reprobate. He has read with great pleasure that part of your letter wherein you express yourself so well satisfied with him: you always say every thing in the best manner it can be said, and you are so charming, that this separation from you appears almost insupportable; but what can I do? There are many things yet to settle, which concern you as much

as myself, and I might have as well not made this journey at all, as to make it too short; so that I must resolve to drain the bitter draught to the bottom. Besides, as I observed to you in a former letter, the money I save by being here serves to pay off a part of my debts elsewhere; without this expedient, what could I have done? You know very well what I mean, it has cost me many an uneasy moment; and, indeed, what could you yourself have done but for the lucky assistance you received by the King's bounty? At present, I fancy, you have made matters up tolerably well.

Mr. de Grignan has been very expeditious in coming from Lyons to Paris, considering the dreadful weather we have lately had; his return will determine the fate of Mademoiselle d'Alerac; it has been her own fault, I believe, if she has not supplanted Mademoiselle de la Vallette.

I approve entirely of your suppressing the custom of new-year's gifts; it would only have been a great expence to no purpose; that which you have sent me is inestimable, and comes from a heart that there is no forbearing to love and admire. I am so well convinced of the sincerity of your wishes for my life and health, that I take care of both, as belonging entirely to you; and that I cannot neglect without injuring a person I love so much better than myself: how few mothers are there in the world who can with confidence say the same! You see however, my dear, that your affectionate and heroic sentiments are not thrown away upon an ungrateful person.



I answered a person the other day, who was telling me of the Count of Fiesque's good fortune \*, that I should pity him more now than I did when walking on foot in his honest poverty. You tell me a strange adventure about de Termes: the life of that man is really a romance; I find, however, that the King is not very well pleased that this affair has been talked of. Let me entreat you, my dear, to see now and then the Duchess of Chaulnes; as she is not perfectly well versed in friendship, she has all the warmth of a novice, and writes me word that she is always seeking for some one to discourse about me with; that she went to pay a visit to Madame de la Fayette, where she saw you just returned from Versailles; in short, I have inspired a heart with love that had no notion of the passion.

I observe that your wishes for success in your affairs all tend to the advantage of your son, without any regard to yourself; in like manner may I consider you only in all the notions I make: and it is no small comfort to me, that from the superiority I have over you I shall, according to the common course of nature, hold the present rank I have about you: happy thought I to reflect, that, so long as I live, I shall never live without you. I am perfectly well pleased with those papers I sent you, you may without ceremony open them all; I believe you will never have

\* John Louis-Marie Count de Fiesque, to whom the King had obliged the Genoise to pay 100,000 crowns, or about 18,000 pounds sterling, for which he had a claim upon that republic.

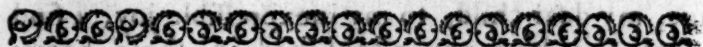
any cause of dispute with your brother, he loves peace, has a just and christian-like disposition; and you are quite right in saying that you find great reason to be satisfied with his conduct in the present instance. I am certain it was always his inclination to secure you from being a loser: in fine, my dear child, to my inexpressible joy, I find peace and harmony established in those hearts where I most desired it.

And now, my dear, I must desire: you to take neither the side of St. Remi nor of Châtelet, but, like me, observe an exact neutrality; the Princess espouses the cause of St. Remi, my son that of Châtelet, on Madame de Tisé's account\*; but there is nothing more to do than to clear up this point among themselves; perhaps the affair may be decided by the parliament, and so taken out of the hands of the Marshals of France.

Farewel, my dearest; I desire you will load Beaulieu with your commissions, for as he is going to reside at Versailles, he may be useful to you in many instances; therefore make use of him, as if he was your own. There is another thing I have to request of you, which I conjure you not to refuse me, that is, that you will not think of accompanying Mr. de Grignan to Gif, as it will be both a fatiguing and a dangerous journey for you at this season of the year; you know that you suffered three bleedings for the sore throat you got by your former jaunt thither. I

\* See letter of the 15th November.

desire Mr. de Grignan will act for me, and be careful of your health. This is the first favour I have to ask of him, after congratulating him on his safe return to you.



\* L E T T E R DLXXXVL

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 23 January, 1685.*

I do not think that the world can boast a more amiable person than yourself; but your merit, which all the world acknowledges, would not touch me so sensibly as it does, if you was not at the same time the most tender and affectionate child that ever mother was blessed with. Where shall we find one who like you is so attentive to the health, the life, the correspondence of a parent, and who makes them the continual topic of conversation among her friends, as you do? I was extremely well pleased with the dinner at the hôtel de Chaulnes, and I do not doubt but I shall be as contented with this night's supper, where I shall find Mr. de Lamoignon\*; I had a mind to mention him to you, to see if you profited by your neighbourhood: but this supper has set me quite right on that head. I should be sorry that Coulanges should put such an affront upon you, as to refuse your invitation.

\* Christian Francis de Lamoignon, President of the parliament of Paris, son of Guillaume de Lamoignon, first President.

It

It is lucky for me that I had by me some of that sympathetic powder: my son will tell you how good a condition my leg is in\*: it is true, indeed, that a little sore, which we thought healed, has lately given some indications of breaking out again; but it was only to have the honour of being conquered by the sympathetic powder; you may therefore depend upon a complete cure: I have managed myself extremely well; as to my walking, it has rather done me service than hurt; for, when the swelling and pain are abated, you must not keep the leg continually hoisted up upon a chair. I take the greatest precaution in regard to my health that any one can do; it is for this reason that I have avoided the cold evening-air; and every thing that could hurt me; as to the paragoric balsam, it was of no service; which made me apply with joy to your sympathetic powder, which is indeed a divine medicine; the wound has now quite changed its aspect, and is in a manner dry and perfectly healed: in short, if with the assistance of this powder, which heaven has sent me by your hand, I can once more get to walk about as I would do, you may say to yourself, with certainty, my mother is perfectly well.

But, after all this long harangue about my health, let us speak a word or two of your's: Madame de la Fayette has given me to understand how heartily you intend to laugh at the physicians, if this powder should cure your side; but, my dear, is it possible that all which Jossin and Alliot say about its effects can be true? If it really is, I shall look upon it as a particular

\* Madame de Sévigné had at that time a sore leg.



gift from heaven. Indeed you ought, both of you, to think seriously of something that is likely to do you service for those complaints; and lose no knowledge for want of inquiring after it.

But, good heavens, what a stroke has this been for the triumphant Choiseul! What a glorious winter has this dreadful disorder \* cut short in the middle! They say that she walked a whole night in the frost and cold, chusing rather to die than to have it. All that you say to me upon that head is of a nature to go no farther than ourselves. Let me recommend the opera to your serious perusal: upon my word, you are rather too severe to turn into ridicule passages that would bring the tears into your eyes, was you to see them represented; for my part, I have a great veneration for what has been handed down to us with the approbation of antiquity.

The good Abbé is greatly surprised that the debt, which you with so much honesty and generosity put before your own, should not be thought a sufficient security: and he cannot help thinking that Mr. de Montausier has suffered himself to be guided by persons who are of a very rigid and bad disposition. What lawyer Favier said to you was admirable, and you are in an excellent place for having the best advice. This will prove a very critical year for your affairs, and Mr. de Grignan's presence will not be a little necessary. As it has not pleased God to permit me to be a witness of the conclusion of these matters, and that I can act no other part therein but that of

\* The small pox.

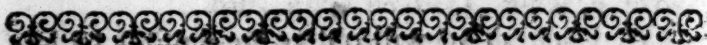
an earnest suppliant to heaven for your success, rest assured that I will acquit myself of that part to the utmost of my power; and you may be persuaded that this place, above all others, holds those who wish the least hurt to you or your son.

You will oblige me sensibly by letting me know, from time to time, how things go on; I do not know what to think of this marriage. I have thought very seriously of taking vengeance of the Chevalier for his epigram; but, upon reflection, I found it more convenient to imagine that he never said any thing half so obliging to me as he has done.

I was to see the Princess of Tarentum on Thursday, she has brought Madame de Marbeuf back, but terribly afflicted with a cough and fever; the good creature would write me two or three lines, tho' her poor hand could hardly hold the pen: I find she is determined not to admit the visit of any physician, nor suffer herself to be bled, but will undertake her own cure with simple physicians; we shall see the event of this, and according as it succeeds, or fails, we shall censure or applaud her; for my part, I am of opinion that she will get over her disorder.

I have read over again your letter to my son, I am much affected with it, and admire you thro' the whole; your expressions, in regard to me, make you but too dear to me. Your sister-in-law is very far from being in any danger of an hæmorrhage; on the contrary she stands in need of some medicine, to let her know that she has any blood in her veins. She is, after all, a  
very

very agreeable little woman, and takes a sincere pleasure in hearing me talk of you, not without admiring the strength of affection you demonstrate towards me.



• L E T T E R DLXXXVII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Monday, 29 January, 1685.*

**T**HIS day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, I received your letter of Saturday, that is to say the day before yesterday; this is a dispatch that would serve to comfort me for the absence of any person but such an one as yourself; but, my dear, it is impossible not to feel, like you, the grief of being all thus separated, when we are all upon such a footing of perfect friendship with each other: you cannot suppose me insensible to these things. I will inform you to-morrow of the fair way my leg is in, and the next day, I hope, my son will be able to inform you of my being perfectly cured; for my part, I am so confident of it, that, was it not for our scrupulous exactness, seeing that every thing is but two days sooner, or two days later, we should already have sung De Deum in our letters. My leg is now like the other, no redness, no swelling, no pain; is it not therefore cruel to keep one in suspense about a thing that is as good as concluded. But now, my dear, let us say a word of the day of monsters, as you

you call it in your's, which is certainly without its fellow. We laughed till the tears came into our eyes at your account of your three visits; the first is an absolute picture, the original of which is fully present to my imagination. For mercy's sake talk no more to me of my letters, or manner of describing things! Was you to see some of your own, you would be obliged to own that I was far from being the best painter of the Hotel de Carnavalet; in short, it is our misfortune that we have an opportunity of perceiving the beauties of your writing that you have not. The house whither your love for me carried you, is another description equally natural and uncommon, and the figure of Madame de Buffi, with her scarecrow of a head-dress, is indeed a capital piece. It requires an infinite share of imagination to remember names in the midst of all this.

But last night's entertainment, my dear\*; I really think it was very elegant and well conducted. I was there with the flower of my friends †, and should have been very much vexed if Mr. de Lamoignon's nasty colick had prevented him from giving us his company. I began to doubt of Coulanges, but at length every thing fell out as could be wished, and we sung *Merry be all our hearts*. Coulanges is really worth his weight in gold. I preserve all his letters. He writes me word that the king intends to mend the air of the palace-royal, by banishing *the nymph and swain*; upon which

\* See the preceding letter.

† Madame de Sévigné was wont to transport herself in imagination, to every place where she knew her daughter was, and to speak of things as if she herself had been present while they were transacted.



he adds, that his wife says, "She is sure] that his  
" majesty has more piety than to be for removing  
" what alone can make the blessings of *Monsieur's*  
" house." As this is rather new to me, I must  
acknowledge that I thought it very prettily turned.

Madame de Lavardin seems highly  
pleased with a visit that you have made her; this  
gives me no small satisfaction, and I am more o-  
bliged to you for it, than that which you made on  
account of my name. Madame de Lavardin is  
an excellent person to consult on all occasions; I  
am sure she satisfied you for the three monsters you  
had seen. I love, from the bottom of my soul,  
that old and sincere friend.

*Tuesday 30.*

We have made no great progress  
these last twenty-four hours, but your powder  
must not be offended at it, since it is not expected  
that the cure should be instantaneous, provided it  
be effected at last.

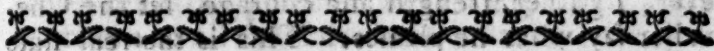
I have read, with a great deal of  
pleasure, Corbinelli's letter, wherein, by your  
order, he gives me an account of a very entertain-  
ing dispute that was decided by the Abbé Polig-  
nac \*; he appears to have been quite confounded,  
and struck dumb with the infinite vivacity of your  
wit. Do you think you could not make the Abbé  
remember something of a mother you have in Bri-  
tany? has he quite forgot her? He's now a perfect

\* Melchor de Polignac, afterwards Cardinal of that name.

court Abbé, and very different from the one I once knew buried over head and ears in a black gown. Madame de Marbeuf has had courage enough to cure herself of a violent cough and fever, by refusing to see any physician, or to be bled.

*Wednesday, 31 Jan. 8 o'clock at night.*

My son is now writing to you separately, and I fancy, that, without comparing notes, we shall be pretty much in a story, for we both write the real truth. My leg is nearer being healed than it was yesterday; and if you can forgive me my rebellion against the sympathetic powder, and that you will indulge us with fifteen days, instead of four, the powder will be proved to have had its effect.



\* L E T T E R DLXXXVII.

To the same.

*The Rocks, Sunday Morning, 4 Feb. 1685.*

MY cure has proved longer than we at first imagined, but still it is you who have cured me. We thought, indeed, that it would have been an affair of two or three days only, but a fortnight is now past, that is all our mistake. The cicatrix wears the appearance of being soon compleated, and in order to hasten it, we shall, with your permission, lay aside the oil, and apply the black ointment you sent us, and which will not at all impede the operations of the pow-

powder. I desire, therefore, you will banish the imagination of a wide gaping wound, since, in fact, it is very inconsiderable, and my leg is neither inflamed nor swelled.

I have been at the prince's's; I have been a walking; so that you are not to look upon me any longer as a creature fit only for an hospital. I have not the least air of a sick person. I am perfectly blooming, and not so watery-eyed as I was some time ago, so that there remains no reason for pitying me, my dear, for any thing but being deprived of your company, and that I am not able to share *metaphysically* in your parties. This is indeed a loss to me, as we are very *cogitative* in this part of the world, we are now and then obliged to swallow a bitter, less agreeable than your's; however, I gather strength and courage, let the Chevalier say what he pleases. This is the real state of my mind and body. I tell you things just as they are, and I must have a very strong persuasion of your affection for me, to send you such a journal in the midst of the pleasures of a court, where you certainly are at this time. My affection for you is altogether natural, and founded upon a number of substantial reasons; but that you shew for me is uncommon, and almost without example, which occasions mine to exceed all bounds.

Madame de la Fayette writes me word, that she has seen you, and that you have had several conversations together, and that she is perfectly *infatuated* with you; I use her own expression; she adds, that you would be the most perfect creature of the age, if you had not too much sensibility, for which she is angry with you.

In

In this manner, my dear, my friends receive your visits, and admire you, for Madame de Lavardin has wrote me a whole sheet on the same subject, as likewise the good duchess of Chartres. You describe so exactly the different expressions of those who wished to see me in my apartment again, that I had them all present before my eyes. I regretted extremely my not being at that supper, when the entertainment was so elegant, and the company so good, and in such high spirits. Methinks Mr. de Lamoignon seems perfectly well to know the merit of the good housewife of *Carnavalet*; Believe me, you cannot make too much of such a friend. I partake in all the joy of him and his family in their place in the council, but at the same time am not a little concerned at the nasty gravelly disorder with which he is so tormented. It is a cruel thing not to have a day's ease; it is the haven to all satisfaction.

I am highly diverted with all the bustle in the Chartres family, since the duchess can never be jealous; I think, if she was, her friendship for me would have led her to acquaint me of it. Coulanges has made me laugh heartily with this story, and I join with him in admiring the *boly triflers*, and the disposition of those who can compals all their ends, when another person could not advance a step towards it.

I return you thanks for the news you sent me. I cannot find out the reason of Flammaren's being in disgrace with MONSIEUR. I fancy our good Marshal d'Estrades \* will carry on

\* Godfrey Count d'Estrades, Marshal of France, had lately been made



on very great intrigues in this bustling court. Heaven preserve your health, my dear, such as you now tell me it is. I fancy the succory soups are very good; I shall try them myself. I fancy you do not try the sympathetic powder. I find you have not yet tried the paregoric balsam. I cannot bear the thoughts of Rhodes \* selling a post which had been so long in his family. I think I ought to have been with you at Gourville dinner; the whole house of Pomponne should never have kept me away. I both envy and respect the pleasure you enjoy in these connections, but much more that of seeing and being with you, and tasting of that affection which is so dear to me.

So you will have the pleasure of seeing the Doge †. This is the same as if the whole republic had come in a body; but what can resist the will of our monarch?

*Five o'Clock in the Evening.*

My son has just seen my leg, and I assure you he finds it in a very promising way, and abating the expedition of four days, all the world must allow that I owe my cure to the sympathetic powder.

made governor to the Duke of Chartres, afterwards Duke of Orleans, and Regent of the kingdom.

\* Charles Pot, Marquis of Rhodes, who had lately sold his post of Grand-Master of the State Ceremonies in France, to Julius Armand Colbert, Marquis of Blainville. The Marquis of Rhodes was the fifth person of his family who had successively enjoyed this honourable post.

† Of Genoa (Francis Imperiali Lascari) who was expected with four of the principal senators of that republic, to come to the court of Louis XIV. in order to make their submission, in the name of their state, to that monarch. On the 15th of May following they had their first audience.

powder. Your brother has just applied the black ointment for making the cicatrix, which is all that remains to be done; and we keep the rest of the powder like the apples of our eyes, for some other important occasion. Nevertheless, my dear, I still insist upon it, that you have cured me, only it was not with that miraculous promptitude as you imagined. I have been taking a walk, so that you may see I am neither sick nor lame, therefore set your mind at ease. I am rejoiced to find that the Chevalier is so well. I affectionately embrace Mr. de Grignan. The *Worthy* salutes you both. He never writes any thing about me, for he is so lost in accounts and calculations, that he quite forgets his poor niece.



# \* L E T T E R DLXXXIX.

To the same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 7 Feb. 1685.*

**Y**OU cannot do better than divert your melancholy at Versailles, tho' it would be still better to have no melancholy to divert. I am afraid the sympathetic powder has no effect on old disorders, for it has only cured the least troublesome of my sores. I at present apply the black ointment, which is an admirable medicine, and I am so near being cured that you ought no longer to trouble your head about me, otherwise than

than to love me, and share with me in the present pleasing hope with which I am actuated. I have not one symptom of a fever; I am like another person; I eat moderately; when it is fine I walk abroad, for I am advised to use my legs as there is no inflammation; I write, read, and work with my needle, and receive your letters with the usual eagerness and raptures. This is the real state of matters with me; and you may rest assured, that I dislike too much to be deceived with regard to you, to practise any thing of that kind upon you.

I am at present in my room, but I will not swear that I shall not take a walk upon our terrace. Set your imagination to rights then, my dear countess, and draw the veil of apprehension, that prevents you from beholding me such as I really am. Think no more of the poor old woman crying out, with the *pious Aeneas* at her feet; there is nothing at all in it, I assure you. Nevertheless, I intend to spare my legs as much as possible, because, when once they are angered, they are not very soon appeased again. The other day I had a mind to try a dose of friar Angé's purgative infusion, and found myself somewhat the better for it; but after all, I see no reason for troubling a perfect health, and your slight medicines, upon the whole, do more harm than good.

I shall now conclude, leaving you in the midst of that glorious bustle, in which I fancy you are engaged, and be assured, that, even this situation, you do not think of me with less tenderness than when retired by yourself in your chamber; and of what other person can the same  
be

be said? On the other hand, who can feel more sensibly than I do the whole merit of so tender an affection?

~~\*\*\*\*\*~~

\* L E T T E R DXC.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 14 Feb. 1685.*

THO' I know that you are at Versailles, tho' I believe and hope that you are well, and tho' I am sure that you have not forgotten me, yet as I have not received any letter from you in course of post, I cannot help being uneasy, and anxious to know the cause, for how can I exist without this sovereign comfort of my life? I will not say how much pleasure your letters always gave me. It is the fear of being troublesome to you that restrains me from expatiating as much as I would on that head. In reading over your last letter, I observed, with heartfelt pleasure, the tender manner in which you express yourself on the bare hopes of seeing me again next spring; but a cruel improbability, which stares me in the face, prevents my indulging myself in that joyful hope, and I have patiently submitted all to the disposition of providence.

My son and his wife are at Rennes, whither they were called by some business. The poor little woman is so terribly afflicted with the vapours, with frequent returns of a fever, and a dis-



distracting head-ach, that I have advised her to consult the capuchins, for it was they who put all in a flame within her, by the violence of their medicines. My son takes Jacob's essence two or three times a day, which must certainly have a great effect. Besides, it is always better being in a large town, than in a little country village. For my part, I am here all alone; but that I might not be without a living creature to speak to, I have taken that pretty little wench that Mr. de Grignan was so fond of; for a whole evening she reads to me while I walk; and God, who always blends good with ill, has made me amends for being deprived of society, by giving me a perfect cure. I am persuaded to walk now and then, as I have no swelling, and I think it gives me spirits. Hitherto faith has proved stronger than truth; but now, my dear, the thing is concluded, and heaven has been pleased it should be by your hands \*. My son was complaining of this the other day, for to say the truth, it was owing to him (tho' with a very different intention) that my disorder was so long getting well. As he was setting out on Monday, he bid adieu, in a droll manner, to my now hardly perceptible sore, saying, that he should never see it again; and that, having lived so long together, he could not but feel some concern at parting with it for ever.

The princess no sooner heard that my son (who you know is in bad terms with her) was set out, than she flew hither, with all the affection in the world. Farewel, my sweet girl,

\* See letter of the 4th Feb,

you

you know what I mean, when I say I embrace you tenderly.



L E T T E R DXCI.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 27 Feb. 1685.*

O H! my dear, was ever any thing so unfortunate as the death of the King of England \*, just at the eve of a masquerade? My poor little Marquis † is strangely unlucky to meet with such an unexpected bar in the way of his pleasure. I know nothing that can comfort him for this disappointment, but the universal encomiums that have been given to his pretty dress, and the hopes that the masquerade is only put off for a time.

My dear child, I make you my compliments of condolence on these great events, and expect your's in return upon my mistaken ideas, for I was at the masquerade, the opera, and the ball, snug up in a corner, and contemplating you and your's with admiration; in short, I was in all that flutter of pleasure which you may suppose in your poor mama on such an occasion,—and—and—I was mistaken at last.

\* Charles II. who died 16 Feb. 1685.

† Louis. Provence, Marquis of Grignan, Madame de Sévigné's grandson.

I enter into your sentiments, my dear, better than any one. Yes, yes, I can very well conceive that we are transfused into our children, and, as you say, are more them than ourselves; I have sufficiently experienced these kinds of failings, which are not without their pleasures when the object is deserving of them, and the admiration of every one else. Your son, for instance, gives general satisfaction, there is something infinitely smart and pleasing in his countenance, there is no looking upon him with the same indifference as on others of his age; he commands attention. Madame de la Fayette tells me that she has written to Madame de Montepan to acquaint her that she had engaged her honour for her that you should both have reason to be contented with her. I know not any person who would be more happy than Madame de la Fayette to serve you.

I am not at all surprised that you should have an inclination to go to Livri during this fine weather; for my part, I am all the fore part of the day in these beautiful walks, but never dare encounter the evening chills. I wear your handsome Brandebourg, which is a perfect dress, my leg is quite whole, and I walk like any other person, so do not be uneasy that I use it, for I should absolutely die was I confined to the house in such fine weather as this. I have wrote my son that I have nothing more to do with him, that I can walk as well as himself, and bid him trouble his head about his own business: he and his wife are still taking the pleasures of Rennes, from whence they are not to return till Shrove

Shrove Sunday, at which I am not a little glad, as I have company enough.

The Princess comes frequently to partake of my repose, she has given the good Abbé a divine medicine, which has perfectly cured him of the head-ach and fainting fits, that alarmed me prodigiously : the princess is certainly an Esculapius in her way ; I am serious, for the capuchins themselves allow that her dispensary affords some of the most rare and valuable drugs in the universe, and she has performed an infinite number of cures.

The *Worthy* wishes he could do the honours of the house for you at Livri, for if you intend to keep your Lent there, you will have but indifferent cheer ; but I hope you do not think of living upon a Lent diet with that pain in your side ; as it is, I think you have tried your disorder pretty well, by the many journeys you have made to Versailles ; as to living low, I think it would be destruction to you, for you require something to keep up your strength, and yet I receive daily accounts how well you look ; Madame de Vins writes me word that you are quite another person to what I left you.

Is it not something extraordinary, that you and I have not had a word together yet about the death of the King of England ; he was far from being a man in years, he was a monarch ; this shews that death spares no one. It will be a great happiness if he was a good Catholic in his heart, and died in the faith of our holy church. That country appears to me a theatre, that is a-



bout to furnish some very extraordinary scenes: there is the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Monmouth, such an infinite number of Lutherans, and then such a confirmed aversion to all Catholics: but time will discover in what manner providence will direct this tragical event; however, it seems it will not put a stop to the diversions at Versailles, since I find you are to return there on Monday. You say many tender and obliging things to me of the concern you should have to leave me behind at Paris, was I there; but as that is not the case, to my great regret, make the most of this opportunity, follow the court; no one is formed to make a better figure there, and I think every thing seems to tend towards the completion of your desires. My wishes on that head, though made at such a distance, are not less ardent and sincere, than if I was with you in person. I feel, though less delicately, the truth of a remark you made to me one day, and which I then laughed at, that you was so much mistress of my imaginations and heart, that I had you always present with me; this is very true, my dear, but I must own I had rather enjoy that satisfaction in reality.

Before I conclude, my dear, I have a word or two to say to you; you have a notion that your brother is a clever fellow, that he has a taste for elegant eating, and knows how to order an entertainment in the best manner; so far from it, child, that he knows nothing at all of the matter; his man Larmechin still less, and the cook least of all; indeed it is not to be wondered at if one who was a tolerable cook should be entirely spoiled here; in short, I am the Pontac of this house,

and

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. 149

and no one presumes to pass their judgement upon any dish till my countenance has been first consulted. The ambition of letting you know that I reign over a tribe of ignorant people extorted this paragraph from me.



\* L E T T E R DXCII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 28 Feb. 1685.*

**Y**OU are now returned to Versailles, and your masquerade goes on swimmingly; the death of the King of England has not been able to damp the ardour of the courtiers in their pursuits after the pleasures of the Carnival. My friends write me wonders about your beauty; as you are not yet past the age for it, make the most of that endowment, and hide not that charming face which obtained you so many praises, even when languishing in sickness; how much more then will fall to your share now you are in the bloom of health? Upon the whole, a pleasing symmetry of features, or what we call beauty, is no contemptible qualification. I expect you will tell me a great deal of news of my dear little boy: I have been strangely out of late; I was two days together at Versailles \* seeing him dance, and admiring every motion and step; I have it all to begin

\* See the preceding letter, page 145.

over again. I thought I supped on Sunday last at the Duke of Chaulnes, and instead of that it was a dinner on Monday; in short, you impose upon your poor mother's credulity.

Good God! what a droll story, and how comically told, is that of Bouquet! What a strange confusion was that antient and honourable house in! Was not the fair *Bouquetera* strangely discomposed? Well, such an adventure would never have entered into my imagination: I think I see the stately dame, and the poor innocent youth, that could hardly look any one in the face; but what pleases me more than all the rest is, the relapse; but really these loobies of brothers with their long swords were insufferable; tell me how they could possibly extort a promise. In the mean time, my dear, rest assured that a syllable of this shall never escape me, not only because you desire it, but because I myself should make a scruple of speaking of it to any one.

The story of the Abbé broke upon the wheel was really shocking! Corbinelli will tell you he was of a very good family, and might have made a respectable figure in the church. I declare to you that when I read the sentence of the poor wretch, I was forced to have recourse to my smelling bottle; a whole week under ground, with his head downwards, oh! the very idea is enough to make one faint! But pray is it possible to live a whole week without eating? Well! there are strange planets! a pretty conclusion this Abbé has made indeed! and greatly he has profited by stealing a bank-note! But see what human

man nature is capable of when left to itself by God.

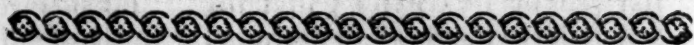
The *Worthy* is perfectly recovered from his giddiness, there was one time he had quite lost his sight; I have been terribly alarmed; I wrote you a letter on this subject, which I may, perhaps, send you on some future day, it contained a few random reflections, of which you may make such use of it as you think proper. I could make an excellent use of Jossion's powder, if my leg stood in need of such assistance; but I am perfectly cured, thanks be to God, *not forgetting yourself*, as they say in this country. I walk with the greatest ease and pleasure, and amply make up all the time I have lost.

You have great reason to praise the Abbé de Polignac in the manner you do; he is really very well deserving of esteem, and has an excellent head-piece of his own; but you speak very slightly of your brother, he seems to slip from you by accident. I am extremely sorry for Mr. and Madame de Guitaut, but there is nothing certain in this life.

H 4

LET





## LETTER DXCIII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Ash-Wednesday, 7 March, 1685.*

WELL, my dear Countess, I am as forward in my Carnival here, as you and my little Marquis are at Versailles. I spent my Shrove Monday with the princess, where we had as pretty, little, elegant a dinner as can be imagined; she talked to me about the masquerade, and I read her your account of the little Indians, which is so happily related. Yesterday I had to dine with me a worthy friend of the truth, an honest pious creature who was superior of the late bishop of Alet's seminary, and who after closing the eyes and doing the last pious offices for that truly saint-like prelate, retired to his own family; he has not spoke to a soul in this country but me these two years. We both of us have the same acquaintances, the same friends, and our sentiments are the same, with this difference only, that he is a saint, and I am not one, that's the misfortune; however, I spent my Shrove Tuesday very agreeably.

My son is still at Rennes, and I am very glad he is, because he seems to be glad of it himself. He cannot tell you greater truths relating to my leg than I have done, for I have told you the naked truth; I have been troubled indeed  
with

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. 153

with some few heats and pimples after the wound closed up, but, by the help of your arquebusade-water, every thing was soon set to rights; and so ends this affair, and I shall now resume my walks as usual. After all this, my dear, can you say with a safe conscience that I pass lightly over what relates to me? or have you any reason to accuse me of giving you uneasy apprehensions by my silence?

Coulanges has sent me a very pretty description of your entertainment at the Hôtel of Chaulnes; no one in my opinion can exceed him in the pleasing art of giving to the most common occurrences an air of novelty. I find you are grown a dabbler in politics; your last company was composed of people who answer exactly to what were formerly called people of importance; you will let me know how the conversation passed on that occasion.

Our little hero \* has been the object of universal admiration; Madame de la Fayette and her son have wrote me wonders concerning him: this will prove a great winter for him, my dear; he is likely to advance so fast in life, that if you had given him the same kind of education which we were wont to give youth formerly, it would have done him great disservice; on the contrary, you have followed the only proper method, and it is very clear to me that he will make a distinguished figure in the world at an age when others are but beginning to enter upon it.

\* See the letter of the 25th and 28th of February.

It is high time therefore that he should now begin to make his appearance on that great theatre, and your residence at Paris will happily contribute to that end; had it not been for you, he would still have been confined to his room under the eye of a tutor; but your presence at court, and the manner in which you have brought this darling son up, will be the making of his fortune. I have long reflected upon all this, but chiefly this winter. He has already been seen by the King, who has appeared pleased with him, and to look with attention at a person and a face that is out of the common road; so that we may suppose if words had followed thoughts, you would have heard such as would been no way displeasing to you. You will be at no great loss to conceive how nearly I interest myself in all these matters.

What you said of the Abbé Charier is very true, he has not the winning manners of his father; but he has a very just and upright way of thinking, no small share of understanding, and a good heart, which I would not advise him to change against any other at Lyons\* or Paris. You are going to have a number of the Grignans with you; pray is Mr. de la Garde to be with them? He writes me word that he intends to be there. I should, as well as you, make my advantage of this agreeable society; but alas! I have as yet finished but one half of my career†; I should have no ob-

\* The Abbé Charier was then at Lyons.

† Madame de Sévigné had resolved to tarry a whole year at the Rocks, in order to settle her affairs, and she did not arrive there till the 21st of September 1684. See Letter DLXXIV.

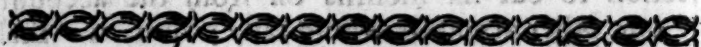
jection to cut six months off from the account, if our other accounts would tally; but we shall see how it will please providence to dispose of us all.

I find that the King of England's death has turned out more philosophical and *English*, than Christian or Catholic. *Farewel King!* Those words almost choak me, they cause an infinite number of ideas, they shew an uncommon share of fortitude; he was but in the prime of life, and yet to be obliged to quit every thing in the midst of enjoyment, and be hurried to death (of which he had never taken any thought) from the lap of riotous pleasures and debauchery!

Farewel, my dearest; a thousand compliments to the dear Count, and the clumsy vinegar-man, who rolled his wheelbarrow so awkwardly; but I do not see any thing of the Duke of Bourbon, who used to dance so well. I knew before that Choiseul had one rib broke, but two are rather too much.

My dear little Marquis, let me kiss you and congratulate you on your late success. My imagination has been greatly delighted with a pretty little Indian, who dances to admiration, shewed a noble presence, and pleased every one.





## LETTER DXCIV.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, April 11, 1685.*

**I**NDEED, my dear, you are too good even to mention Versailles to me! How I admire you in the midst of that concourse of all that is superb and gay; and I cannot refrain laughter, to see you running from table with the morsel in your mouth to church, and, the moment the sermon is over, from thence to the play. It is all excellent well, my dear; but it is now time to take a little rest. You may easily judge of my sentiments by your own, and that I cannot hold you wholly excused for running the risk of giving me the most dreadful disquietudes; as to me, you may be perfectly easy on my account; nothing but the indifferent weather we have had of late has hindered me from exercising my new leg, I still treat it as a visiter, I do not make free with it on all occasions; it is a kind of stranger that I want to use to my ways; I propose nothing extraordinary or out of the way to it, and when it has taken a pretty tolerable walk, I do not say to it as I would to the other, "Come, shall we take the other turn?" In short, I treat it with all the respect of a new comer.

I have

I have made your compliments to the Esculapian fathers\*, they have received the like from all parts of Europe; but as you are not acquainted with this affair, you will not be able to understand my meaning. You must know then that these good fathers, who were on the point of being driven out of the country in an ignominious manner, are to their infinite joy established in the good opinion of the world, by the judgment of Solomon, for such his Majesty's late decree appears to be. The Duke of Chaulnes is supposed to have been the chief promoter of this happy change. The apology of the fathers is in the hands of every one in the province, and all are persuaded of their innocence. In a word, my good Duke, I rejoice with you in the honour you have gained by this affair, because I love and esteem you; for which, if you please, my daughter will be my security.

What can you mean, child, by your strange imaginations, saying you tremble to see me in such a bad way, when nothing at all ails me? Indeed, child, you would laugh at your own fears if you could but believe your mother just as she is at present; if you will not believe me, ask the Princess. By the way, will you not return her thanks for that divine medicine she has sent you? I would have done it for you, only she always insists upon seeing that part of any of your letters in which she is mentioned, and I should not like to be caught in a falsehood.

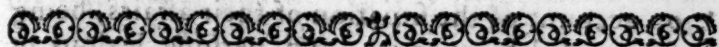
\* The Capuchins of the Louvre, as they were called; a body of Monks who made themselves very famous in Brittany, by several cures which they performed.

I have just been writing to Coulanges, and took it in my head to give him a lecture upon that wicked little conscience of his, of which he only diminishes the *quantity* every year\*, without mending the quantity; for I am sure, as soon as the holy week is over at Baviile, his capital sin, which is, *merry be all our hearts*, will return upon him as strong as ever; but, indeed, almost all the world are the same, with this difference only, that his failings being less blameable than many others, we for that reason take the greater liberty to blame him for it. I have desired him to tell Mr. de Lamoignon from me, that I accept with all my heart of his invitation, to see him at Baviile, with you, in September next.

I wish the vacant abbeys you mention were filled by his Majesty in the same manner you have filled them; however, their time will come. I request that you will send to the Abbé Bigorre, to desire him to put the Cardinal de Bouillon in mind of the sum that used to be given me every year out of the royal benevolence; it is but trifling, indeed, nevertheless poor people are glad of any thing. I will let you know where that money is to be sent.

\* At Easter, a general time of confession with the Roman Catholics.

\* LETTER



# \* L E T T E R D X C V .

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 25 April, 1685.*

**P**REPARE yourself, my dear, for another proof of my sincerity. You are certainly endowed with the spirit of prophecy, child, and I shall for the future tremble whenever you only dream that I am ill. You said, the disorder in my leg was not cured, notwithstanding the high airs I gave myself about it; and I begin now to perceive that you had truth on your side. About four days ago my wicked leg took the fancy to swell, and burn, and break out in little pimples filled with scalding water, and, in short, to play such pranks that surprised me, and every one else, as we were not at all prepared for this new insurrection; as for me, I retired to my bed, and let it take its course. It appears however to be a crisis which nature stood in need of; my leg discharged plentifully, and I am convinced it will be my cure; for nothing was capable to dissolve those hard lumps in the calf of my leg but such a discharge. However, we have sent for the Capuchins from Rennes, to make us a visit here; my son is desirous of having them for his wife, who is going to take their medicines again. As for me, I continue to use certain embrocations, which I know they have prescribed in the like cases with these, and which are excellent for effecting a cure.

We



We have received an answer from them, "that, on account of the situation of their affairs, being surrounded by enemies, and persons jealous of their success, they could not leave their convent; but desire that I will come immediately to Rennes; and assure me, that, as soon they shall have seen my leg, I may depend upon a cure; but that they could do nothing till they had first examined the part afflicted." In short, they press me so earnestly to take that little journey, and Madame de Marbeuf has offered such a convenient apartment, that I set out to-morrow, in the imagination that you would have it so, and that you advise me to try a change of air, and besides that, by putting myself at once under the care of experienced persons, I may be assured of a cure; so you say, or, at least, I am fond of believing you would say. I have therefore resolved to set out only with *Mary* and two footmen, in a chariot and six. I shall leave the *Worthy* behind with my son and his wife, and shall return the first moment I am able; for, I assure you, it is with no small regret that I quit this peaceful solitude, and the reviving verdure that Spring calls forth all round us; but then, I think, there is something ridiculous in always fancying one's-self cured, when it is no such thing; so that, I shall even follow your advice, and see the end of it. In all probability, I have nothing more to fear after the kindly crisis nature lately formed; but I shall be the better satisfied of it, by hearing the Capuchins say so. The little wound is closed, and it is not closed; so that it requires a masterly hand to deliver me from what I have so long suffered, living only upon hope, and twenty times falsely imagining that all was well. Methinks I can hear you, at this distance, commending me for  
my

my resolution, and telling me, that you are out of all patience at finding me so often deceived. Madame de Marbeuf appears so transported with the thoughts of having me with her, and expresses herself in so warm and affectionate a manner, that I am really at a loss how to answer her kindness; when one cannot absolutely feel the same sentiments in return, it is embarrassing.

*To Monsieur DE GRIGNAN.*

We love you so well, my dear Count, that we do not think Adonis himself was half so handsome, at least he had not so graceful an air as you have; and that is the beauty of a man. Go, go your ways to Livri, after having finished the pious exercises of this holy season, in your present retreat; your lovely wife will inform you in what place my destiny has determined I shall pass part of my days; I should have been very glad to have remained here, but God did not see fit I should. Your brother-in-law seems perfectly reconciled to this retired life, nay he is fond of it, and looks upon it as an earnest of his not being melancholy hereafter; he is greatly taken up with this train of thinking; heaven continue him in it, for the time will come when all the gayeties of this life will avail us little. We all of us join in compliments of condolence to you, on the death of the Chevalier de Buons\*, for whom we had a very great regard, which every one must have had who knew him. I hear of nothing but persons

\* He was of the family of Pontevéz, and cousin german to Mr. de Grignan.

younger than myself daily dropping off; this, you know, must beget certain reflections.

*To Madame DE GRIGNAN.*

Now for you again, my dear. Nothing can be finer than that gallery at Versailles; this kind of royal beauty is without its fellow in the world; I can see it here, by taking a part for the whole. Did you not, while in the midst of all this splendour, once meet the eye of the worthy favourite? and, in so immense a space, did not you make one step towards her, nor she towards you? I shall not tell you what success and happiness I wish to you, my dear, and to all the noble republic of the Grignans, that will soon be assembled.

I hear that the double marriage of the Dukes of Bourbon and Maine\* is fixed for the month of July, and that several ladies are already half crazy about the place of lady of honour. I have wrote to Madame de la Fayette, that I shall give my vote to Madame de Moreuil for the Duchess of Bourbon. Pray forget not to mention me to the Pomponne family, for I am determined not to be forgot by them. I shall not write to Coulanges to-day, for I know he is at Baviile.

My leg is so much better since yesterday, that, was it not for the trick it has lately

\* The Duke of Bourbon was married to Mademoiselle de Nantes, the 24th of July following; but the Duke of Maine's nuptials with Mademoiselle de Bourbon were not solemnized till the 14th of March 1692.

MARCHIONESS DE SÉVIGNÉ. 163

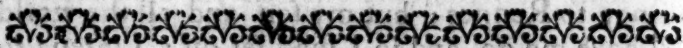
played me, I could find in my heart to spare it the journey to Rennes; but my son and all the world will have me go, and so I shall set off; I intend to be back Monday or Tuesday in Easter-week. At present I think I may entertain some hopes, but I cannot be easy when I reflect how often I have deceived you; but it was with no ill intention, and I was deceived first myself, as well as every one about me.

*Monsieur* DE SÉVIGNÉ:

In short, my dear little sister, we are all of us so weary and so vexed at the obstinacy of my mother's disorder, and the many tricks her leg has played us, that I myself insist upon her going to Rennes, where she will be immediately under the eye of the Capuchins of the Louvre; but we have been so often taken in, and this cure, which we always thought obtained, has returned again so frequently, that, in order to remove all your uneasiness as well as our own, we have sent her away to the fountain-head of skill. The *Wor- thy* is left behind; so, you know, household affairs will be properly managed.

LETTER





## L E T T E R D X C V I .

*From* Monf. de Coulanges, *to* Madame de Grignan.

*Baville, 26 April, 1685.*

I HAVE been extremely uneasy, Madame, about you and Mr. de Grignan, as likewise about the good lady your mother, whose sacred characters I have not seen for some time; in fine, that concern which I always shall preserve for whatever relates to you began to trouble the happy indolence I otherwise enjoy in this place, when your messenger delivered me your letter. It was no small satisfaction to me to hear from you, but at the same time I was very much vexed that this cursed fever should step in so unseasonably, to break all our schemes.

Mr. de Lamoignon has laid his plan to stay here all the next week, and does not propose being in Paris till the 6th of next month; for my part, I design to make the most of my time, and if I can find any one to carry me back to Paris with them, I shall embrace the opportunity, because I should be glad to take a trip to Versailles, as I want to learn from Mr. de Seignelai some news concerning the Languedoc journey; however, if no charitable person can be found to give  
me

me a lift (as Mr. de Lamoignon says, he'll see me hanged before he'll lend me his carriage) I may very possibly not see Paris till he goes thither himself. I wrote to Versailles yesterday, and according to the news I receive from thence, I may be obliged to set out for Paris, if I go in one of the higgler's carts that pass by the end of our avenue every day.

This, Madame, is all I have to inform you concerning this part of the world; do me the favour to let me have a line how things go on at the hôtel d'Angoulême, and I will let you know how I shall order my affairs. I am very glad that the Duke of Chaulnes intends to sell Magni; I have a long time advised him to get rid of it.

I find at length that Madame de Sévigné is at Rennes, under the care of the Capuchins; pray heaven they may effect a cure; but I think it is quite cruel that she should bury herself in Brittany for a whole year, because the Abbé with his calculations has found out that her affairs will not suffer her to return in less time. I assure you, I am under real uneasiness about that same leg of her's; you will oblige me infinitely to acquaint her of the part I take in her sufferings.

The country begins now to be truly delightful, the earth has resumed its verdant cloathing, and the nightingales hail the returning spring with unremitting warblings; we want nothing but a little thicker covering on the trees to shade us from the beams of the sun, which begin to be very scorching, tho' Mr. de Lamoignon

non does not mind them, for he traverses up and down the fields all day long, while his wife and I shelter ourselves within doors, and play at ombre with any charitable person that will keep us company; and every evening, when Mr. de Lamoignon comes home to us, we sing *Merry be all our hearts.*

I take my leave of you, charming Countess; Madame de Lamoignon sends you a thousand compliments. I shall shew your letter to Mr. de Lamoignon, when he returns home at night.



## LETTER DXCVII.

*Madame de Sévigné, to Madame de Grignan.*

*Rennes, Sunday, 29 April, 1685.*

*WE shall be mad enough to take Rochelle\**, and I shall be unlucky enough to suffer myself to be cured by these same Capuchins, my dear. I read with fondness and admiration your christian sentiments, in which I heartily join with you; if I can obtain a cure in this place, after all the torments I have suffered, his holy name be praised; if not, and I should be obliged to return to Paris, in search of better assistance, and thereby should see my dear loved child again sooner than I

\* A saying of the great men at the siege of Rochelle, in 1628.

expect,

expect, his holy name still be praised. Thus did I prepare myself for whatever the Sovereign Disposer of all events should please to ordain, but in my heart would have preferred a continuance of my disorder, if it was to procure me the pleasure of seeing you three or four months sooner, to a cure that was to keep me at a distance from you, for I know not what effect of reason can ever get the better of this inclination. I accepted of the generous offer made me by Madame de Marbeuf, and I should have remained with her some time, if my leg, out of mere contradiction, did not grow better and better every day; besides, you know it is no small tax upon one's sincerity to be obliged to pay such friendships with an appearance of affection foreign to one's heart; so that I soon shall set out for the Rocks again, my leg being now just as well as its companion, which for these last six months may truly be said to have been *without its fellow*. The skin indeed is discoloured, and I do not know when it will recover its natural hue; but these are only the usual consequences of such affairs. I do not know whether my cure is performed by sympathy, but the wound grows better by degrees, as the herbs with which it is steeped, and which are afterwards buried, rot in the ground. I had a great mind to laugh at this conceit, but the Capuchins tell me, that they have daily experience of the proof of such effects. I should be glad to know what Alliot thinks of it, for I am not sure, after all, whether it is the ceremony of burying these herbs, which is performed twice a day, or whether it is the fomentation or the liniment that are used to my leg; but this is certain, that the part is very different from what it was, and that, if this should prove no more than a temporary



ry cure, I shall come to you in search of a perfect one.

But, my dear child, you have thrown out a hint in one of your letters, which gives me inexpressible uneasiness: you say, that if I am determined to come to Paris, you shall hardly be gone before I arrive; for heaven's sake, my dear, what do you mean? Do not deceive me in a point so essential to my happiness! do not rend my poor heart with insufferable apprehensions! You assure the world that I shall find you at Paris in the month of September, and that your affairs will not be settled at that time; for my part, I make all the dispatch I possibly can with mine, I suffer not a single moment to be lost; but I have a thousand matters to settle that are too tedious; but should I have the least reason to think that you were likely to be gone, I would set out at all events; therefore it is for you to direct my matters by your prudence on the one hand, and by your affection on the other. You know the state of my affairs, you know the state of my health, and you know your own engagements, direct my matters therefore according to all these; but, unless some great change has happened, reflect what a number of affairs you had to settle, and that there is not much more than three months to the period I languish after; for I reckon we are as good as in the month of May now. In a word, I trust my destiny entirely in your hands.

I am extremely uneasy about the Chevalier, whose disorder you represent in a very alarming light. It is very unlucky that those pills, which have done every one else so much good, should

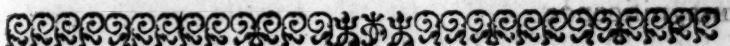
should have done him alone harm ; it is cruel to be in continual pain, and not to know which way to turn one's-self for relief ; his situation quite afflicts me. As for Mr. de Grignan's fever, I look upon it as of lesser consequence, only I would not have you suffer the physicians to draw such quantities of blood from him. After all, my dear, I am afraid these fatigues will have a bad effect on your own health ; the spring, you know, generally causes a little ruffle in your health of body ; tell me therefore how you find yourself, and tell me without disguising the truth ; learn from me to act openly on these occasions, at the same time let me intreat you to strike me out of the list of your uneasinesses.

I had a visit lately from the little person we were formerly so well acquainted with, she is full as agreeable and amiable as ever ; we were very glad to see each other, I wished you present to hear her, or rather her husband ( for she has been reckoned among the number of the dead ) relate in what extremity the great physicians of this country left her, and how the Capuchins snatched her from the jaws of death ; it was really worth hearing ; you will say perhaps her time was not come ; no one joins more heartily in an opinion of that kind than myself ; but still I cannot forbear admiring the second causes made use of by providence, to call a poor creature to life from the brink of the grave. We may not improperly apply to these talents what father Le Bossu says in his treatise on epic poetry, concerning the veneration in which the first race of mankind held those who were visibly protected by the gods.

But whither, my dear child, am I wandering? I left off with Madame de Marbeuf, she read with great delight the two or three lines you wrote about her to me; no one can be more sensible of your esteem; she makes my time pass very agreeably here, we have good company and good music. I went to take an airing in the ring yesterday, but with all the parade of a sick person, because I would not be liable to receive any visit. I had one, however, on Thursday last, from the Princess of Baden, who told me the whole story (that I already knew) of her wrath, which is like that of Achilles's, and of her banishment. I went in the evening to return her visit; and as I found I could not please her better, who is never weary of talking, I gave her a patient hearing of three hours; I had my leg reposed upon a stool; for, without some such a distinction, I should have been at a loss to know which was the sound or which the bad one.

You have now, my dear, my whole stock of news, pray send me some of your's in return. I shall set out from hence on Wednesday, to the no small regret of my good landlady; but the *Worthy* longs for my return. I embrace with all tenderness your poor sick folks; but you, my dear, with something more than tenderness, with a passion that words are too poor to express. I shall write to my poor Coulanges from the Rocks. The Capuchins send you a thousand compliments, and ten thousand assurances of my being perfectly cured. The Duke of Lude is in a condition truly pliyable, he is under their hands, but with small hopes.

\*LETTER



\* L E T T E R DXCVIII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 13 June, 1685.*

**Y**OU use me ill if you think I grudge the postage for the book of carousels; never did I pay any thing with greater satisfaction: it has proved a feast to us, ever since we have had it; I am certain, that, if I had been at Paris, I should only have read it superficially, for in that place one occupation still extrudes another from hour to hour; but here we are perfectly to ourselves, and at leisure to attend to any one object as long as we please. We have had high arguments upon the devices of this book. Pray tell us what is meant by that of a dog who is gnawing a bone, for want of something better to eat? We are quite at a loss here. I believe we shall be the occasion of your reading this book. I am highly delighted with the race in which Mr. de Luxembourg's two hams bore the prizes. The Abbé could not contain himself when we came to this place, but wished he had been one of the Paladins. Pray was the Duke of Bourbon very pretty? Tell me without disguise what sort of a figure he made; was his shape and air any thing like that of our little Marquis? I am afraid not. Well, after all, it is a terrible mortification, amidst so much grandeur and splendor, to be deficient in shape. I



hear that his wedding is to be celebrated with great magnificence.

Madame de la Fayette complains to me, in a very affectionate manner, that she scarce ever sees you now. Madame de la Troche acquaints me, that Madame de Moreuil was taken by the Dauphiness into her coach, on Wednesday last, and that this is thought an earnest of being appointed lady of honour to the Dukes of Bourbon, because the King said he would have the person to be appointed to that post be taken into the coach, without any one else; but I think there was no occasion for so much hurry. I wish she may have that place; you know I gave her my vote from the beginning.

Do you know, my dear, that my vapours seemed inclined to pay me a visit the other day, had I not frightened them away with the essence of urine; but, what is very extraordinary, it prevented me from sleeping the whole night, tho' I was nevertheless glad to have it to use. After all, my dear, I am an ungrateful wretch in complaining of the vapours, for they never attacked me once during the time my leg was so bad; and, indeed, it would have been very ungenerous of them to have taken that advantage. Now I am speaking of my leg, I will inform you how matters stand with it: for some time past there was no wound to be perceived, but the place was so hard, and so many humours were settled about it, that the good Fathers thought it necessary to heal it leisurely; which they did by applying pul-tices of certain herbs wetted and laid to the part, which were removed twice a-day, and then buried,

ried, and by degrees as they rotted (nay, you may laugh if you please) the part sweated and grew foffer; so that by a mild and almost insensible perspiration this leg, which had been so badly healed before, is absolutely cured. I hope you'll tell all this to the surgeons, who, I suppose, will be ready to die with laughing; but I do not care for that.

Would you know where I was yesterday? I was at the *Place Madame*, where I made a party with the tennis players. Oh, my dear Count, I always think on you, how gracefully you strike the ball! I wish you had as fine a place for that diversion at Grignan as we have here. I intend presently to pay a visit to Pilois; in our long walk he is making a delightful green slope, from the end of it towards the road. I hope, my dear child, after this you will not accuse me of being very retentive, or that I neglect to inform you of any circumstance.

Let us now have a word or two of the Duke de Chaulnes: he acquaints me that the states were at Dinan, and that he proposes to open the assembly on the first of August, in order to have time to come and carry me off from hence about the beginning of September; and he runs into a thousand drolleries about you, such as, that "he has at length brought you to the point he desired; that you begin to coquet with him, and that in a short time he expects——" In a word, he delights me highly with his raillery; and, to say the truth, I have a great regard for him and the Duchess, who in her letters tells me a hundred little sonnets. I cannot conceive how

some people can find in their hearts to hate them as they do, and embrace every opportunity of teasing and perplexing them. I am very glad, however, that you are insensibly become one of their friends. Had the states been at Brièux, it would have been insupportably vexatious. It remains now to see who will be appointed commissary; this will be another disagreeable circumstance also; if you are upon the footing of confidence with the Duke and Duchess, they have a great many things to tell you; nothing can equal the trouble they have had for some time past.

My dear, I wish you would observe what fashion prevails among the gentlemen in their dress, for I should be glad you would send me some handsome thing for your brother, who wants a genteel suit, to receive our governor in; at the same time I wish you would consult the Duchess of Chaulnes about a summer-dress for myself to appear in at Rennes; for, as to the states, I shall beg to be excused waiting upon them. From Rennes I shall return hither, in order to pack up my awls, and to prepare for the high festival of seeing and embracing you again; Madame de Chaulnes will not be very sorry to accompany me. As one would not chuse to appear singular or ridiculous in such a place as Rennes, I should be glad to have your taste in my dress, always remembering economy, and that gravity which becomes one of my time of life; you will be better able to judge than me, when it will be necessary to send these things to us, as you will be acquainted with the time that the Duke and Duchess shall set out; and you may be sure I shall be among the foremost to welcome them to Rennes. I really blush at the

ingra-

ingratitude they have met with from the people of this country, whom I should be sorry to resemble in this respect.

We hear (this is very much to the purpose you'll say) that the Minims\* of your Provence have dedicated a piece to the King, in which they compare him to God, but in such a manner as to make the Deity hold little better than the second place. This curious piece was shewed to the Bishop of Meaux, who spoke of it to the King, telling his Majesty that such a thing ought not to be allowed; upon which the King, who was of the same opinion with the prelate, ordered it to be sent to the Sorbonne for their revival; and they have decreed that it should be suppressed: *too much is too much*. I could never have thought the Minims capable of running into such blameable extremes. Was ever such an ignorant wretch as I am, to send you such news of Paris and Versailles!

You seem to have a romantic regard for the Princes of Conti†; as for my part, I cannot help blaming them for quitting such a father-in-law, and not trusting to time to shew them enough of war. Lord knows, they would not have wanted opportunities in the station they are in; no one doubted of their courage, and therefore what need had they to set up for wanderers and knights-errant? Their cousins of Condé did not want

\* An order of friars.

† The Princes of Conti and Roche-sur-Yon were gone to serve in the wars in Hungary, where they were present at the battle of Gran, and performed prodigies of valour.



opportunities of signalising themselves, nor would they. However, *con questo* \*, I finish, my dear child, devouring in imagination the month of September, which is not far off, heaven be praised.

\* An Italian expression, signifying *with this*.



\* L E T T E R D X C I X .

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 17 June, 1685.*

**H**OW glad am I that you are at Livri, and that your mind is disincumbered from all the business of Paris! You are enchantingly kind in the affectionate remembrances you send our good Abbé and your poor mama. I am sometimes amazed where you find the only proper words for expressing your sentiments on every occasion; but it is the heart that speaks, and that can never be at a loss; for whatever praises you formerly gave to the wit which can counterfeit the expression of the heart, it is at best but a poor impostor, that is always betraying itself by some slip, and those who are well acquainted with the language of the heart are not to be imposed upon by this faint resemblance.

You charm me by recalling to mind all the pleasures of Livri; you and Livri are indeed too much, and I should not be able to resist the impatient desire of returning to you there, if  
the

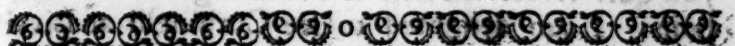
the dear month of September was not so near at hand, which is to procure me that blessing. But what do you tell me, my dear child ! is it then owing only to the resolution of Mademoiselle de Grignan not to declare herself till the month of September, that you determine to wait for me at that time ? and that, if I had returned to Paris a month or six weeks later, I might not have seen you there ? The very thought distracts me ! I know not how to reconcile it with that probity I always found in you ; haste then to make me easy on that head ; for tho' I am certain that such an event cannot now happen, yet I long to hear it from yourself. Oh *Saint Grignan*, how much I am indebted to you for this happy certainty !

But to return to Livri ; you are my own daughter, you are enchanted with that place ; would that the pleasing charm might continue to operate on you till the end of the year ! You are very merry with that smirking smile of the Prior, and toss of the head which bespeaks approbation ! But how can you talk of hearing the nightingales in the middle of June ? My dear, the pretty warblers are now taken up with the care of their young family, and no longer think of chanting or making love ; more weighty cares now occupy their little breasts. I have not heard one of them here, they are all got down in the meadows by the ponds ; but that is a great way out of my beat, for I think myself very happy to be able to traverse our beautiful walks, which are as smooth as a bowling-green.

The Princess was here yesterday, who gave us an account of the caroussel ; I

thought we had been a little extravagant in our encomiums; but considering the place where we are, we may be excused for amusing ourselves with trifles. We know that at Paris those things are the wonder only of a day; but we are not at Paris; therefore I am sure you will not be too severe upon us for our folly. I desire, child, I may hear no more from you about your youth being over, leave these kind of speeches to me; for when they come from you they push me a little too forward in life, and put strange things in one's head.

I desire you will not be at the trouble to go to Paris, to execute the commissions I gave you in my last for my son and me; it will be sufficient if you send for patterns; write to d'Escars, she will do that business for you; so pray do not give yourself any trouble, but enjoy your charming situation in peace and tranquillity. We have a moon here exactly like that you have at Livri, and we have not been wanting in paying our respects to her. The *Place Madame* is a charming spot! It is like a large *Belvedere*, from whence you have a prospect of the country round for ten or twelve miles, terminating with a large wood belonging to Mr. de la Tremoille; but the moon has a finer effect among the high trees in your Abbey. I am looking at it now, and I fancy you are employed in much the same manner; it is an odd place, you'll say, for to make a rendezvous in! Baville will be a much better; what say you, my dear? My son and his wife both love and reverence you.



\* LETTER DC.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 20 June, 1685.*

THE good Abbé, my dear, is quite delighted that you enjoy yourself so well in his abbey; he says, that you know better how to manage matters there than we did; but the poor folks at Baville are disconsolate at not having you with them. Coulanges writes me word how much Mr. de Lamoignon regrets your absence, and puts me in mind of the month of September, and the circumstance of finding you there. I behold the approaching period with an extatic pleasure; let it be ever so much to the disadvantage of my affairs; but as it is an expence that one is obliged to be at, it is better to be in advancing towards a beloved object, than in remaining without hope.

You amuse yourself in a very pretty manner; it is certainly right, as you say, to observe some kind of rule, tho' without vow. It is rule which prevents the despair of those who are devoted to a retired life, and makes the time lighter to those who are not. It is rule that teaches us what we have to do, and fills up our time; your's indeed has no void, for, with the agreeable place and company you are in, your hours must pass agreeably; for that reason I would not have



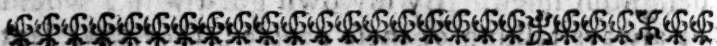
you quit it for the sake of executing our commissions. I am delighted to see Corbinelli at Livri with the Polignacs; it is a kind of connection that presages no sudden rupture, and it is possible the flame may grow the stronger by being a little interrupted.

We have laughed very heartily at your short and smart replies to my son's questions: we are not so modest as you imagine, we perceived there was some hidden meaning in two of them especially; but modesty indeed would not permit us to demand the explanation from you. I enter perfectly well into the disputes and conversations of Corbinelli; but you should not out of friendship hinder him from giving scandal to weak minds: I am not sure that he might not be accused of attempting to set up a new system of divinity. Poor Chevalier! what, entirely lost the use of his limbs, and obliged to be carried about everywhere! It is a melancholy situation! my heart bleeds for him. Besides, it is an age since he was at Versailles, which cannot but give him a good deal of uneasiness on more accounts than one; pray tell him I heartily sympathise with him in his sufferings. I am not much pleased neither with that nasty fever of Mr. de Grignan's continuing upon him so long. I wish our Capuchins were near enough to take him in hand, they would soon make an end of this affair. They have lately recovered two women-patients from the brink of the grave, one of whom is already about, and the other much better. One of these they were called in to, after she had been left almost lifeless by the physicians, who had bled her twelve times; she was in the agonies of death, the last sacraments had

had been administered to her, and she was upon the point of giving up the ghost; well, they fell to work, promising that she should not die before the next morning; and it is now near a month since she has been perfectly recovered: I shall let you know how their other patient does, for you must indulge me in my fondness for praising these good fathers. I acquainted them the other day that my leg sweated a good deal; they returned me for answer, that they knew it, that it was the point they had aimed at by their remedies; but that I might rest assured of a cure; at the same time they sent me a liquid which they called *essence of emeralds*, which is to strengthen the parts, and has a most delightful smell. By my own good will I would be always talking of these people; they have sent my daughter-in-law a medicine lately, which they tell her will be the last she will have occasion for, and that she is now perfectly cured: but as they are not quacks, nor promise miracles, they are not at all dishonoured if they have not always success. As for my vapours, my dear, I have not had a return of them since the time I mentioned to you; besides they have no connection with the disorder in my leg; and if I was to have another visit from them, I should have recourse to the spirit of urine, notwithstanding I did not sleep all night after the last dose; for I am sufficiently sensible that one may be in a certain way that one cannot sleep without the spirit of urine being the cause, or indeed without being able to assign any cause at all.

I am delighted to find you continue so well; may you long enjoy such a happy state of health! and may heaven prosper all your wishes and designs. The good Abbé is very angry at  
Madame

Madame de Coulanges, for depreciating our woods as she does, especially as they are now honoured with your presence. Pray make my compliments to all the good friends at Livri; you are undoubtedly the centre of many hearts, and many places who are linked to you by a kind of sympathy, when you make them happy by your love, or indeed even if you do not love. Was not I right in wishing always to have a share in that pleasure which is to be found only in the heart? Mine is wholly your's, my dearest child, and has been for a long time, and you have been and ever will be its darling object.



## LETTER DCI.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 1 July, 1685.*

**I**F I was to have a fancy to say that I would set out from hence next month, I know of nothing to hinder me; for the four or five days that one generally idles away after the day fixed for departure, would just complete my reckoning. Thus far, my dear, are we at length got by dint of coming, going, writing, and by being disappointed and lingering-out in hope, day after day, such as God has been pleased to send them; therefore I will, after your example, indulge myself in the pleasing hope of seeing and embracing you the next month. I humbly hope God will permit

permit us to taste this joy pure and unallayed, tho' nothing in the world can be easier than to find out a bitter to dash it with; but were we to look too closely into futurity, we could never enjoy a happy moment in life; and it is a mercy that providence gives us the power of banishing sometimes those melancholy reflections, which would otherwise be continually tormenting us, either on our own account, or those of our friends and intimates; therefore, my dear, we have nothing to do but live and be merry.

I readily conceive Mademoiselle de Grignan's reasons for not remaining at Gif\*; it is certain, that, after having been brought up in the school of St. Augustin†, she would here find heresy in that of Moline's; a change which could by no means agree with her. I approve much of your desire to see her at home again, as she must be a blessing and edification to the whole family. Can you not find out an opportunity to assure this charming saint how infinitely I honour her; I had so long the happiness of living with her, that I would not willingly be entirely forgotten by her. We will one day have a little chat about the different destinies of the two sisters: we ought to leave all to God, as the Bishop of Angers observes, and live in a constant submission to his will and providence, otherwise there would be no living in the world, and nothing would be heard but incessant complaints of second causes.

\* See letter of 8th October, 1685.

† That is, the Carmelite convent in the fauxbourg (or suburbs) of St. James, at Paris.

I have



I have by accident fallen upon a part of a letter I received from Marbeuf, which will put you out of all doubt in regard to my leg. I must confess that the length of the cure gave me some uneasiness, and that I had written to her that I was afraid they flattered me; her answer, as you will see, was altogether natural, and shews that the good fathers laughed at me for my incredulity; and, to my great joy, I can sincerely say, that it is now upwards of six weeks since I have had the least appearance of a sore. I walk as much as I please; I use the *essence of emeralds*, which is so pleasant, that, if I did not put it to my leg, I should by choice put it upon my handkerchief. I have other things by me that I might apply if I saw occasion; but I believe that I shall take the good fathers advice, and not be any more inquisitive about a limb that wants none of my care; I must even get to Paris, where I shall forget it. Methinks you seem to have put Mr. de Grignan upon much the same expedient, by telling him that he is much better at Versailles. Nothing can equal what you say about the manner in which one forgets one's-self in that place, notwithstanding self is the only thing thought on there, under the appearance of hurry, and carried away by the general circle of other affairs; but I need only repeat your own words, "One is so concealed and enveloped there, that it is with the greatest difficulty we can discover that ourself is the motive of all the pains we are at." I defy the tongue of eloquence itself better to define that kind of situation. Hence then it appears necessary to quit sight of one's-self for a while, and regard other objects. The Capuchins are certainly of this opinion, insomuch that they will not give an answer

to

to any important questions. They are very sorry that Mr. de Grignan has been bled, as they say it is the worst thing that could be done for him; they would be very happy to have the cure of him, were they in his neighbourhood; but at such a distance they do not chuse even to give their opinion. They are great observers of times and humours, and the physiognomy; if you have any inclination for their service, you must set Mr. de Chaulnes to work, who has them at his command, as you have him.

It has no bad appearance that the King was at the trouble to inquire after your sick folks; this is some consolation to poor courtiers, who live only in his smiles. One of the women whom our Capuchins had under hand, is lately dead; but do you know how that happened? Why, they could not find out a method to make her a new pair of lungs, and it seems half of her own were wasted when she first applied to them; indeed they never would promise more than to preserve her life for some little time, and enable her to make a comfortable end; and they have succeeded in their undertaking.

I am really very sorry, my dear, that you are obliged to quit Livri; you are now whelmed over head and ears in business again; I fancy you have had but indifferent weather these three or four days, we have had it very cold, with a chilling rain, quite unlike these gentle showers that are wont to fall at this season of the year. You may have seen by my letter that my son will keep his word with us, and think himself happy to be drest after your choice. I thought  
his

his wife would have died with laughing at the list of those colours that you say you do not intend to send him, at the same time that you promise it shall be very handsome; in short, do as you please, we leave the whole to your direction, hoping, however, that you will proceed with œconomy; I will marry when you please, provided it is *Mistress Hortensia*. As for me, my dear, do with me as you please, you know better than I do whether I shall need new cloaths, and what sort of ones are most proper for me. Coulanges writes me word that our states are all to be new cloathed the first of August; but you are on the spot to know all this; it is certain that I shall not want any thing new, if the governor does not come to Rennes, for I shall not go to the states, and I am pretty sure they will dispense with that compliment rather than prevent me from keeping my appointment with you.



## LETTER DCII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 8 July, 1685.*

**Y**OU are too good, my sweet Countess, to give yourself such infinite pains about our cloaths, but really you describe the embarrassment you was under so merrily, that I cannot find in my heart to pity you. You will make me finer than I desired, but I must submit when I consider

consider that the choice is your's, that I shall be in the fashion, and the same as the Duchess of Schomberg and Madame de la Fayette, and that I shall certainly see Madame de Chaulnes in whatever part of the country she may be, and what is still better than all the rest, I shall see you too, and do you the honours of what you have chosen for me. My son is very well pleased with the thoughts of appearing as well as Mr. de Coulanges.

We have most shocking weather here, when once it begins to rain in this country it never ceases. Madame de Chaulnes will have no occasion to be apprehensive of the heats, she seems highly pleased with Mr. de Fieubet's being appointed commissary; I am the same, and do not think it was possible to make a better choice, and in my opinion our governor seems to have gained his point in every respect this time. Coulanges has wrote me a whole volume, nothing can be more worthy attention and curiosity than what he tells me, he has let us into the true light of many things that will pass in the assembly, and of which we should otherwise have been at a loss to understand the reason; in a word, he has shewed us the whole game. I suppose he has told you his visions about me, he has done so to others, and I have answered them; if you see Madame de la Fayette, desire her to have a little chat with you about the matter.

I desire you will inform me of every thing that relates to your own affairs, to the journies the court is to make, and to Mr. de Grignan's health, for on all these depends my departure.



parture. I only wait for one person about business, and then I am ready for setting out. Madame de Chaulnes insists upon my coming back with her; I do not dislike the offer, but then how can I get clear of going to Chaulnes with her? and it would be death to me to delay an instant in my return. However, we shall see how all this will turn out, and, in the mean time, we shall constantly hear from each other. I should be agreeably surprised if the waters of Vichi were found of benefit at two or three hundred miles distance from their place, but I fancy the Chevalier is a little doubtful of it as well as myself: I should be glad to be deceived, and that Mr. de Grignan was to find himself cured of all his present complaints, for this feverish habit of his makes me not a little uneasy; he has not taken the bath yet, I find; pray let me know how it is with him and the Chevalier. La Garde is health itself.

I suppose, my dear, you will go now and then to Gif, and oftener to Versailles, where, perhaps, you may get more advantage by your mourning for Mr. de St. Andiol, than me at the assembly, that is to say, my son, who is become so greedy of my company that I cannot get a moment's leisure to visit my woods by myself. Mr. du Pleffis (our's) joined with us in laughing heartily at the serge of Nismes; you have the pleasantest way of saying things! He has an high opinion of you, which I have not lessened by my representations. We have here in the room of his sisters a young lady from St. Mary's, whom you would take to be a professed nun of the Visitation, and yet she is not above sixteen years of age.

age. Her father brought her here in last Lent, and left her behind him; she is very pretty, and seems to have an affection for us all; she seems particularly fond of being the staff of the *Worthy's* old age, and the fondness with which she does him a thousand little services, has diverted us greatly.

Madame de la Fayette acquainted me some days ago, that Madame de Moreuil was appointed lady of honour to the Duchess of Bourbon; if so, I am really rejoiced at it. I desire you will not forget to make her my compliments upon it at a proper season; she is now very comfortably provided for; has her husband any place in the Condé family? My son has told me wonders of the good bishop of Angers \*, who, tho' he is upwards of eighty eight, carried the canopy with the host, on Corpus Christi day, and notwithstanding the procession marched above a mile and a half, he immediately after celebrated high mass. Every one was struck with astonishment at the visibly miraculous manner in which he seemed to be supported, and it may truly be said of him, *forza non à, ma l'animo non manca*, "His body's feeble, but his mind is strong." Tell this to Mr. de Pomponne: every year he appears a greater prodigy.

*Monsieur* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I myself was witness to this miracle, and had the unspeakable pleasure to receive the benediction and kiss the hand of this holy

\* Henry Arnauld.

prelate. It is surprising how fearful all his diocese is of losing him, and seeing his place filled by some whiffler, who will study only to curry favour with the enemies of this good man, who thinks only of forgiving those who have distressed his old age with a thousand vexations. I could dwell a long time on this subject, but it is better to return you thanks, my dearest sister, for the pains you have taken in providing my cloaths; I must confess that I was afraid you would have made choice of something too shewy, and did design to beg the favour of my princess \* to make choice of trimmings for me, and as she is fond of pastoral air, I should have desired her to have sent me rose colour and white favours, a white vest, and one of the prettiest crooks that was to be had. Is it possible that tennis and fives should have fallen into such disgrace as you represent them. If no one can be found to take my place at tennis, I insist upon it that Mr. de Polignac maintains the honour of fives. I am very much in pain about Mr. Grignan's fever, his lowness of spirits and falling away alarm every one who have heard of it, and have a regard for him. You are greatly mistaken as to the viper medicines, in saying they are heating and drying, the very contrary is truth, as your sister-in-law experiences every day, and I myself proved several years past. It is to the use of vipers that I owe my present perfect health, and do not know myself for the same person as in certain days of past calamity. They temper and purify the blood, refresh and invigorate, instead of drying and heating as you imagine; but then they must be

\* Mademoiselle d'Alerac,

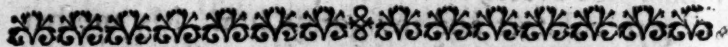
taken whole in flesh and bone, and not reduced to powder, for the powder heats, unless it is taken in some cooling vehicle. Desire Mr. de Boissi to send for ten dozen of them for you; they must be put up in a box having three or four partitions, filled with bran and moss, that they may be quite at their ease; they are to be used in the following manner: Take two of them in the morning when they are brisk and lively, let their heads be cut off, then skin them, and cut them into pieces, with which you must stuff a chicken that must be boiled and eaten: this method must be followed a month at least, and if Mr. de Grignan is not the better for it, blame your brother: leave off that insipid rice broth, and let the poor man have something to comfort and invigorate him. My mother will, very soon, and too soon for us, have an opportunity of telling you how much of our thoughts have been employed by this subject: yes, you will soon have the pleasure of seeing and embracing that dear mother, and consequently your poor brother the mortification of losing her; and what adds to the vexation is, that the sitting of the states will put us all into such a breeze that I shall not be able to enjoy the most of her during her short stay in this country. I can reckon only upon the time that remains between this and the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Chaulnes, for after that my mother will be in a manner lost to me, though still at the Rocks. I begin therefore already to feel the pangs of parting and absence. Adieu, my ever loved sister; my wife sends you a thousand affectionate remembrances.

*Madame*



*Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ.*

I take up the cudgels once more, to assure you that you need be under no concern about my health or my leg, it was better that I had my apprehensions to myself, than that the capuchins should have found any cause for theirs; their raillery upon my fears ought to make you perfectly easy: for my part, I have made my concessions to the good fathers, for the doubts I had of their knowledge, and we are now good friends. Adieu, thou most lovely of women, and most affectionate of daughters.



\* L E T T E R D C I I I .

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 22 July, 1685.*

IT is certain, that after having asserted twenty times over, that I was cured, and making use, rather too rashly, of some pretty strong expressions to confirm that assertion, and having deceived you after all, you have some reason to question my veracity on that head; but I can now positively declare to you that my leg is quite another thing to what it was; there is no hardness, no puffy swellings, no cramps in the calf; in short, it is whatever you or myself can desire; this is all I have to say to you, and let this satisfy you. My maid Charlotte is always for keeping

keeping me on foot, “ Dear madam, says she  
 “ the other day, your ladyship may go to Fougères on Wednesday, where you may be as  
 “ snug as any thing in the world, and the next  
 “ day you may go to Dol, which is not above  
 “ nineteen or twenty miles, and then you will  
 “ see the Duchefs of Chaulnes, which will divert  
 “ you. I think it is high time you should leave  
 “ your chamber, when you have kept yourself  
 “ and me without seeing the outside of the door  
 “ these ten days.” I shall take her advice I believe, and it is no small satisfaction to me to tell you, my dear, that I shall bring you back a leg *à la Sévigné*: but enough of this; one of my principal pleasures in returning to Paris, will be, that I shall have no longer occasion to make myself the subject of all I say or write. Let us now turn to some other subject.

I find Mr. de Polignac is arrived: for my part, I have no notion of half speeches; as Mademoiselle de Grignan will not declare herself, what is the reason Mademoiselle d’Alerac does not? Indeed, my dear, I will not admit the least part of that abuse you lavish so plentifully on your body and understanding to be true; neither the one nor the other can be clumsy, as you say they are. I have known them too subtle, too illuminated, to be angry even if they were to fall into the common class of bodies and understandings; but, what did I say? *Common*! O rash and insolent pen! thou deservest to be split much more than that which the Coadjutor so unjustly abused at Livri. Never was the word *common* made for you, my dear, who have nothing of it either in your mind or body. I reserve that word, there-

fore, to use it in speaking of all the rest of the world that merit no others, a very, very few excepted.

I acknowledge my weakness, my dear, I have taken pleasure in reading the history of our ancient chivalry. If Buffi \* had spoken a little less of himself and the heroine his daughter †, and that the rest of the history was true, it might be accounted a performance that one need neither to be ashamed nor proud of having read. He treats you very well, but he seems willing to make friends with me by giving me praises that I know I do not merit any more than I deserved his censures ‡. He passes slightly over my son, but has inhumanly left him no better than a corner to posterity: he might have said something better of his wife, as she is of one of the best families in the province; but, indeed, my son has taken so little care to preserve his friendship, or rather has always affected to treat him so uncivilly, that, after doing little justice in regard to his birth, he might very well pass over any thing else: you have always used him better, and you see how he has returned it.

Madame de la Fayette has sent me

\* See the epistle dedicatory wrote by Mr de Buffi to be prefixed to the above-mentioned history. Letters of Buffi Rabutin, tom. i. p. 47.

† Louisa Frances de Rabutin, Marchioness of Colligni.

‡ The Count de Buffi not being able to find any essential failings in the conduct of Madame de Sévigné, who was his cousin, has, in his *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*, or *Amours of the Gauls*, charged her with certain follies and defects which she assuredly never had.

an account of the entertainment at Sceaux\*, which has diverted us greatly. It was extremely pretty ! what an infinite deal of wit and invention is found in this age ! every thing is new, gallant, varied, I do not think we can go much farther. There is something very droll in the quarrel between Madame d'Heudicourt and Madame de Poitiers : I admire the reply of the latter, " You are a pretty figure, truly, to grace a feast." Upon my word she was in the right, for in entertainments like these, nothing should appear that is likely to give disgust, and if a person is not blest with a face fit to appear among others, they ought to make one, or to keep away. I wish you had carried your's thither, it would have had few equals. I have heard something about a chaise drawn by Swiss valets, in which Madame de Maintenon was placed by the side of the Dauphiness, then the Marshalle's de Rochebonne was taken in : but not a word of our poor Arpajon † ; I hope she is not in disgrace, as I should be very sorry for it.

Madame de la Fayette has got her pain in her side again, by only going out (in her coach too) to visit a neighbour a few streets off ; she is in a grievous taking, and laments the loss of Valan, who, she says, was her physician, confessor and friend ; but do you not think I am very consistent to give you the news of Paris ! I did not know that la Trouffe was encamped on the

\* The Marquis de Seignelai gave a grand entertainment to the king and court.

† Catherine Henrietta d'Harcourt de Beuvron, Duchess of Arpajon, and Lady of honour to the Dauphiness.



banks of the Saone. His son is at Rennes; I have sent him the letters which is for him. Coulanges has wrote me something about an excellent dinner he had at your house, at which were present two ladies of Provence, and Madame de Lamoignon. I love to be made acquainted with these little debauches when they happen. I shall be delighted to see my good Coulanges and the Chaulnes family; but you may rest assured that if I was not in a condition to go to them, I would not, for there is nothing in the world I am so tender of as my health, in order that nothing may hinder my setting out, upon the first dawn of the month of September. It depends upon you, my dearest creature, to fix the happy moment according to the state of your own affairs at court: I am certain you will be at Fontainebleau till the king goes to Chambor.

But pray is our coadjutor likely to be Archbishop of Aix? I am told so. Your brother does not think of quitting his house; his affairs will not permit him to see Paris again for some years; he has taken it into his head to pay all his debts, and as he has no sinking fund for that purpose, he must take the money by little and little out of his income, and this, you know, will not be so quickly finished. For my part, I cannot hope to get clear of all my debts, but I daily expect a person who owes me 11,000 francs, that I have not been able as yet to come at: but nothing shall hinder my being punctual to the time I promised, being no less impatient than yourself to see the end of this long and melancholy absence. I must, however, do justice to the air of the Rocks, which is incomparably  
good,

good, as being situated neither too high nor too low, nor too near the sea: we can hardly say we are in Brittany, it is Anjou or Maine within two or three leagues of us.

I cannot wish success to the Duke of Monmouth, as his rebellion displeases me: thus perish every traitor to his king \*!

+++++

\* L E T T E R DCIV.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 1 August, 1685.*

**L**AST night, my dear, I returned from my great journey; I took my leave of our governor (the Duke of Chaulnes) and his family at six o'clock on Monday morning, telling them, that I hoped they would excuse me if *I left them before I saw them hanged* †. I must confess I was greatly pleased to be able to make this journey out of respect to them, who well deserve this mark of regard and friendship, in return for the many I

\* The Duke of Monmouth was beheaded on the 25th of July 1685, that is to say, seven days after the date of this letter.

† That is to say, before their departure from Dol, whence they were to set out that very day, but as they had but six leagues to go, and Madame de Sévigné had ten, she set out early on Monday morning, to avoid lying on the road, or remaining all the day at Dol without company, if she had put off her departure till the next morning, Tuesday.

have received from them. Mr. de Fieubet arrived the evening before, and we tasted all that satisfaction which old friends have in meeting together in foreign countries. I thought myself in an enchanted palace in Atlantis while I was at Dol, for all those names I was so well acquainted with moved round me without my seeing them; the first president Mr. de la Tremoille, Mr. de Lavardin, Mr. de Harouis, Mr. de Charot, and others, skimmed at some distance from us, but we could not touch them. On Monday morning, as I said, I set out, and my good Coulanges would absolutely return with me, to pass a week at the Rocks, and my son would make the third; and so we are all here now snug together till the 8th of this month at least; then my son and Coulanges return to pass the last fortnight of the states; and then my son comes here again to take his leave of me; and then—and then—I set off, my dear, and hope to be at Baviile the ninth or tenth of September, without fail. I feel with extasy the approach of that happiness. We have now done, as you say, with the suppositions and calculations that our affection dictated to us some time ago, and our motions are now regulated by the common calendar, like those of other mortals. I am quite free from all pains, I have no fever, my leg is perfectly sound, and not in the least disturbed by my late journey; Coulanges will tell you the same; we quite fatigue that good little body with making him tell us his diverting stories, of which he has an infinite number. The other day he made us laugh till the tears came into our eyes, about your Madame d'Arb . . . of which you are the very model. I fancy that your diversions at the

the seals were a little damped by the disappointment you met with. I cannot conceive what Mr. de Montausier and his daughter \* would be at with their objections to signing the marriage-deeds ; it is a very extraordinary thing, sure, to be so very tender conscienced !

Are you not surprised at the death of Rarai, who was the very picture of health itself ? For my part, I am of opinion that she fell a victim to the vexation of continually hearing her sister praised, and getting only a side-glance, or a word now and then for herself, and that as it were by charity. I took Rennes in my way back hither, in order to call upon the friendly Marbeuf ; as I did Vitré, in order to pay my respects to the Princess ; so that I can now enjoy my little Coulanges without interruption.

I am really greatly affected with the poor Chevalier's condition ; good heavens ! with so much youth and vivacity not to be able to use his limbs ! but to be obliged to be carried about like a gouty old man of seventy ! But I consider from whom these afflictions are sent, and bow my head in humble submission. Adieu, my dearest creature, we will one day have a little discourse about the Duke of Luines † ; what nonsense did Madame de Chaulnes talk of him one day when I was present ! If Madame de la Fayette had a mind, she could shew you a letter of mine

\* Marie Juliet of Sainte Maure, Duchess of Uzès.

† Louis Charles d'Albert, who, after burying his second wife, Anne de Rohan, who died in October 1684, was married again on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1685, to Margaret d'Aligie, relict of Charles Bonaventure Marquis of Manneville, who died in March 1684.



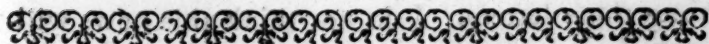
in answer to this subject, wherein I gave her good reasons for continuing as I am †, which both she and Madame de Lavardin highly approved, and might perhaps do me some credit with you, whose esteem is by me infinitely esteemed.

*Monsieur DE COULANGES.*

I have seen the time when I used to write a line or two to your good mama in your letters, and now I write to you in her's; for I have taken up my rest in these mansions, under the shadow of her wing. She has acquainted you with her journey from Dol, which was extremely agreeable, saving that she was overturned twice, and I with her, into a pond; but, as I am an admirable swimmer, I got her out again without any accident, or her being even wetted. It is delightfully pleasant in these gardens, I shall not leave a spot of them untrodden; yet I must confess it will be a little vexatious, after having heartily tired myself, not to meet with the same commons as I have been accustomed to at Mr. de Seignelai's. You have been at Sceaux, I am sure you cannot have been pleased with the company you found there.

Permit me to kiss your hands, my lovely Countess, and at the same time accept a thousand compliments and good wishes for the whole covey of Grignans.

† Madame de Sévigné was left a widow in the 26th year of her age; and it was her own choice that she continued single, for many very advantageous offers had been made her at different times.



\* L E T T E R D C V .

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Monday, 8 August, 1685.*

IF you could manage it so that the first day of September did not fall on a Saturday, or that the *Worthy* had not learned of his forefathers to prefer Monday, so as to avoid beginning a journey of a Sunday, I stand punctual to my rendezvous; but this same Monday-rule, which is much of a piece with the woodcock's thigh, and the breast of a partridge, will make us two days later. I dare not indulge all the raptures I feel at the dear prospect of seeing and embracing you; I endeavour to conceal it from myself, not to give fortune an inclination to disappoint me. I need not tell you what I mean by fortune; let us be modest, and not boast too much of our present prosperity.

We have all been greatly surprised with the piece of news you sent us; the Princess of Tarentum knew nothing of it, and she received the first account of it yesterday from us with all the phlegm of a true German. We imagine that the exiles will have more company: but what a grief, what a madness of vexation must the Cardinal de Bouillon feel in being blended with these rash boys! We are of opinion that the court is something concerned in it, and that these were

not the only follies and impertinences found among those letters. I do not think this news will reach Paris so quickly, it might even be hushed up at Versailles; but it affects too many people not to occasion a general uneasiness. I cannot conceive how people can be so mad and foolish in so prudent a court, and under such a master. Coulanges is here still with my son; they will not set out the Monday next, and propose staying only eight days with the states, when my son is to return and take his leave of me. Every thing is ready for my setting out.

*Monsieur DE COULANGES.*

I am still here; there is no quitting the *mother-fair*. We walk without end or measure, and her leg sets us at defiance, and daily grows more handsome and *jolly*. Your brother is a very dragon at play, and often puts us in mind of Mr. de Grignan, who, saving all the respect that is his due, does not come a whit behind his brother-in-law in petulance. We had the good Princess of Tarentum here yesterday, who has much less state about her than the president's wife of\*\*\*\*, and is much less anxious about her rank than that lady, who cried, ready to break her heart, because the first president of the chamber of accounts would have an armed chair as well as her husband. I have just been writing to all the wives of second presidents in Paris, to let them know that they are ignorant of their proper rank, and that they must come hither to learn it.

*Madame*

*Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ.*

I must absolutely correct that curious paragraph, where, to praise my leg, he assures you that it is very *jolly*; but I tell you, my dear, that it is very finely shaped, and exactly resembles its companion. We walk all the morning, and great part of the afternoon besides, without my leg being the least offended at it; if I said a word less than the truth, Coulanges would tell you, for nothing can remain a secret with him. After all, he is so diverting, so amusing, and has such a number of droll things to say upon many subjects, that I do not wonder he is the darling of every one who has the least taste for innocent merriment: was you to hear him ridicule the formal nothings of our states, and the vanity of the president's lady of \*\*\*\*, whom you know, and who is indeed an original, you would die with laughing.

The *Worthy* returns you all your affectionate remembrances; and your poor brother, who has not been very well these two or three days, embraces you, and requests you to pity him, as he says the country in which I leave him has nothing in it to comfort him for my absence, like that in which I left you. He is quite in the right, my dear; and, for that reason, I set the greater value on that tender grief, which all the gaieties of Paris and Versailles could not conquer; and yet they are excellent places for banishing gloomy thoughts: but your affection is so solid, that no part of it can be evaporated. You see, my dear, that I am not likely to forget any



of the numerous reasons that I have to love you all my life dearer than any other person in the world; and yet, methinks, this is not saying enough.



\* L E T T E R DCVI.

To the same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 12 August, 1685.*

**Y**OUR account of that gold, which was heaped up at the end of the table\*, made me sweat at my fingers ends. My God! how I felt your confusion in seeing such persons pick up what you had thrown down! Methinks Monsieur THE DUKE shewed a very kind concern in what he said to you, not to throw all down; the concern every one was in for you would have made every one say the same thing; for, if you had gone on, it might have been his turn next to have picked up. Nothing could be more friendly than the Duchefs of Arpajon's behaviour†; you was marked down in the list by the King's own hand; you was arm in arm with Madame de Louvois; you supped with the greatest company in France; after all this, it was necessary that you should have a little reverse; but, indeed, excepting the very instant of time, it was a thing of very little conse-

\* At a party of cards given by the King, at Marli.

† Dame of honour to the Dauphiness.

quence,

quence, and do not see it can go any farther. Coulanges says, that, if he was at Paris, he would soon inform you what was said of it; he is still of my opinion, that it is hardly possible such a trifling accident can have made any noise, or do your affairs any injury. You will let me know one day how things pass at these entertainments, and what diverting tale Madame de Thianges destined for the amusement of the company; for she has such choice of them.

You describe the Princess of Conti to me as supernatural; I know not any person who is a better judge than yourself; and perhaps I do more honours to that judgment than I ought, since you make her pass, in my imagination, for something superior to the late MADAME, and even to yourself: but, in dancing, you must excuse me, for surely nothing can exceed that graceful heavenly air, which was always the object of surprise and admiration, and shewed you to be the darling work of heaven.

We have learned that the Duke and Duchess of Bouillon are at Evreux, and that the Cardinal has been sent to for the keys of his apartments at Versailles; all this is very disagreeable: but he has enjoyed such a long course of uninterrupted happiness and prosperity, that he stood in need of some reverse, to teach him that life has its bitters as well as its sweets. For my part, if I did not tremble beneath the hand of providence, I could give an unbounded loose to my joy of seeing you so soon; we have no longer years and months to reckon, they are now weeks only, and will be shortly reduced to days. My son

son has a little disorder flying about him, for which he takes the Capuchins ptyfan that did me so much good; however, he proposes to set out the day after to-morrow with Coulanges, as they might both be at the breaking-up of the states. Coulanges is still as agreeable as ever, we shall want his company at Baille, if any thing can be wanting there. Adieu, my dear, I embrace you affectionately.

*Monsieur* DE COULANGES.

If I was to follow my inclination, I should leave the states to themselves, and remain where I am; however, as I fancy they are near breaking up, I must go, because I intend to return by the way I came. So Madame! I find you made a fine figure at Marli with all that gold scattered upon the ground! I am certain I should have heard of this affair, had I been at Versailles, and they would have told me that you was so transported to see yourself in such a place, that you did not know what you did. But, my dear Countess, let the babblers talk their fill; nothing but envy and malice can say any thing to your prejudice; you know it is an unpardonable crime in a court for any woman to have more wit and beauty than the rest. The King, I am persuaded, will not have the less esteem for you on account of this accident; nor will he be less ready to grant you the survivorship for your son, that you are so desirous of obtaining, because you happened to throw a few pieces of gold upon the floor.

Fare-

Farewel, my charming lady, you will in a very little time have the pleasure of embracing your dear mama, whom you will find as healthy and as well-looking as ever; she will set out to-morrow three weeks, at farthest for Paris. I have spent a most delicious fortnight here. It is impossible sufficiently to praise the gardens of the Rocks, they might make a part of those of Versailles; that is saying every thing.



\* L E T T E R DCVII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Wednesday, 11 August, 1685.*

YOU see, my dear, that we are now come to reckon by days only, not months! not weeks! But, alas! what you say is very true; there could not be a more cruel damp to our pleasure than the thought that we might be obliged to part again almost as soon as we came together; this idea sticks by me but too closely, day or night I am not free from it; it came in my head the last time I was writing to you, and I could not forbear saying to myself, surely this place is sufficient to secure me from the danger of experiencing a greater; but I dare not dwell upon this melancholy reflection, and shall now divert it by the thought that I am soon to see you at Baville. I shall not be at all ashamed of my equipage; my children have very elegant ones, and I have had the



the same; but now the times are changed; I have only two horses of my own, and shall hire four others from the postmaster of Mans; and in that manner I shall make my entrance into Paris without the least concerns.

Coulanges and your brother left us on Monday morning; I went to see them on their way as far as the gate that leads to Vitré, there we stopt to wait the arrival of your letters from Paris, which came as expected, and were read with the usual pleasure. As you only mentioned that Mr. d'Ormesson's wife was at the point of death, I would not write to him; but as soon as you let me know that she is buried, I will venture to send him a line or two by way of condolence and comfort; but indeed, considering the condition she was in, what better could have been desired by her husband and family? Ah, my dear! how humiliating is it to be obliged to drag about the dregs of one's life and understanding; and how much preferable it would be, could we have our wish, to leave behind us a remembrance worthy of being preserved, rather than spoil and disfigure it by the infirmities and weakness that old age brings with it! I should like to be an inhabitant of that country where out of affection they kill their parents when they become old and helpless, provided such a practice could be reconciled to the doctrine of Christianity.

Our men spent Monday evening at Marbeuf's, and sung *Merry be all our hearts*. Your brother is not quite recovered of his slight disorder. I have had some delightful hours of conversation with Coulanges on that same subject  
which

which he is so much at a loss to comprehend; scenes have passed between us not inferior to some of Molière's. When do you expect *Saint Grignan*?



\* L E T T E R DCVIII.

To the Same.

*The Rocks, Sunday, 26 August, 1685.*

WHAT think you of the date of this letter, my dear? is not my 26th better than your 22d? You will find all the rest will go as well, if it pleases God, for that is the whole affair. Let me know precisely the day you intend to set out for Baviile, that I may contrive to be there the next morning: do not make your journey too long, travel at your ease, and let me take my time to come in after you. If you was to make the least doubt of the joy I feel, I should be apt to doubt your's; therefore do not let us do injustice to each other. For my part, I am resolved not to think of some things that are to come, for fear of making myself uneasy. I am resolved to be present at the marriage of Mademoiselle d'Alerac in that very room at Livri; this is one more festival wanting to complete the honours of that mansion; I shall be delighted to partake of it.

What

What is the reason, my dear, that you have been so seldom at Versailles of late? It is making yourself too unhappy about a momentary trifle. I find you are still pleased with Madame d'Arpajon; if we had had the naming of a lady of honour ourselves, I do not think we could have wished for any other. I love your Grignans for talking of moving their apartment on my account! am I not the same *good old body* to them all as to you?

My son is returned from the assembly with Mr. de la Tremoille, who is received at Vitré (by the Princess of Tarentum) like a German Prince. I believe the Rocks will go and dine with Vitré, and Vitré will afterwards come and sup with the Rocks. Monsieur de Chaulnes will very soon tell you as many things relating to the assembly, as my son has already told me; but I question much whether you will give so much attention to them as I have done: but upon the whole, Mr. de Chaulnes has met with some disagreeable things, which have been at length set to rights again. Mr. d'Harouïs has great reason to be contented with the states, and with all his friends; so this is enough to set your mind at ease.

I do not know what you will do for a person to tell you the news of Paris when I am gone from hence; I could send you a great deal to-day, if I was to write all I know; but I chuse rather to reserve it for Baville. I am surprised that Coulanges makes so slight of Madame de Louvois's anger; he will have it that there is no necessity for his being in any haste to justify himself,

self, and will not write, but will wait to speak to her in person; but in the mean time, delays confirm people in their suspicion, they are apt to make complaints, and to say harsh and disagreeable things, and, in short, accustom themselves to look upon the other party in an unfriendly light. Is it not wonderful that so many persons should take a delight in loading this good creature with a thousand things that perhaps never entered his thoughts? Do your endeavour, however, to procure him a candid hearing, and let him not be condemned without a fair trial. He is now at Chaulnes, from whence he intends to write to you. I say nothing about my leg, because it furnishes me no longer with any thing to say. In the mean time, however, I embrace you with all my heart, and I am going to abandon myself to all the happiness my hopes can afford me. I find that I begin already to be less anxious about writing, I have more substantial pleasures in view, tho' indeed your correspondence is, next to your person, the most desirable thing the world can afford me.

We were yesterday at the Princess of Tarentum's, where we saw her son; he has a very fine shape, but is very far from being handsome; he is not the only one of his sex that is so\*. My son sends you many kind remembrances, he is perfectly cured of a slight fever he had, by the use of the ptyfan. Adieu, my charmer, I kiss both your cheeks; are you still handsome and in good case? I hope to know it ere long, *God willing*, as they say here.

\* Meaning Mr. de Grignan, who was remarkably well made, but had an ordinary face.





## \* L E T T E R DCIX.

To the Same.

*Nevers, Saturday, 20 September, 1687,  
6 o'clock at night.*

I Received your letter this morning at La Charité; but you have been under a strange mistake in regard to our motions. We know nothing at all about Pont-Agasson, we came to Milli. Again you are bound to make your excuses to the weather, which you have accused so wrongfully; for, let me tell you, nothing could have been more settled and serene. Fogs we have had few or none, except in a morning, and they quickly were dispersed; besides, the roads are beyond expression fine, they are like a bowling-green from one end to the other; the mountains are levelled into plains, and the road to hell is become the way to paradise; but here I believe I am somewhat mistaken, for that way we are told is narrow and difficult, whereas this is wide, pleasant and easy: in a word, the overseers have done miracles, and we have never ceased giving them the praises they deserve. If ever I go to Lyons, this is the road for me. However, here we are at Nevers; we proposed going to Moulins tomorrow, but one Madame Ferret, an acquaintance of ours, has sent the person at whose house we lodged to Madame de Chaulnes, to shorten our

our journey by two days; for instead of going to Moulins, and from thence to Bourbon, we go to-morrow strait to Bourbon, which is only six leagues; a great saving! and what has pleased me so well, that, exclusive of the sincere friendship I have for Madame de Chaulnes, who would never have taken this journey but upon my account, and the convenience there is in our little vessel being fastened to the great one, the certainty of not losing any time, and of finding you at our return, makes me this time prefer the waters of Bourbon to those of Vichi. I thank you a thousand times for your care and advice; the waters of Bourbon are to the full as salutary as those of Vichi, let people say what they will; besides, from here to Vichi are upwards of sixty miles, and I shall be to-morrow night at Bourbon, with God's will: in short, every circumstance concurs to make me embrace this party; and I am persuaded that if you was here, you would tell me to go to Bourbon yourself. Thither I go then with pleasure, and come with a degree of confidence. If I had consulted Mr. Fagon, he would have sent me there; so no more of that. Nothing can exceed the tender care and assiduity the Duchess of Chaulnes shews towards me; she does not say any thing to me, but I can plainly perceive the satisfaction she feels in our being together.

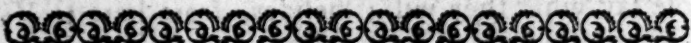
I do not wonder that you are pleased with Savigni\*, it certainly is a most delightful situation. If there are any letters from you at Moulins, I shall have them sent me to Bourbon.

\* A seat about 12 miles distant from Paris, that belonged to the Marquis de Vins, and is now in the possession of the Count de Luc.

I am

I am impatient to have news about the King's health, and about Mr. de Grignan's, and his and your affairs; nothing can divert my attentions from those subjects. I wish you had informed my son of the route the Duke of Chaulnes has taken, that he might have gone to meet him at Fougères. I desire you will let Mr. and Madame de Coulanges know how matters stand with me; I am certain it will be a satisfaction to them.

Adieu, my lovely, I am brimful of the affection and care you shew for me and my health.



• L E T T E R DCX.

To the Same.

*Bourbon, Monday, 22 September, 1687.*

WE arrived here last night from Nevers, from which place I wrote to you. It is true, my dear, that we came in a day, as we were told we should; but such a day! such ten leagues of road! we were travelling from break of day till dark night, without having more than two hours to rest at dinner-time, and all the time thro' a continual deluge of rains, and roads the most execrable that ever were seen, and frequently obliged to walk on foot, for fear of being overturned into sloughs and pools of water that were frightful to behold; and all this after five the most delightful days

days journey in the world, lighted and warmed by the charming rays of the sun, and bowling over roads like carpets; but here we are got into quite another climate, a low country covered with woods, like Brittany. We were received on our arrival by Madame Ferret of Brittany, and were lodged in the same apartments as had been occupied by Madame de Montespan, Madame d'Uzez, and Madame de Louvois. We slept well, and this morning we went to hear mass at the Capuchins, and received the compliments of Madame de Fourci, Madame de Nangis, and Mademoiselle d'Armentieres. We have a physician to attend us, whom I much approve of; it is Amiot, who is very well acquainted with and expresses great esteem for Alliot, and who admires our good man Jacob, with whom he was in waiting six months at the Duke of Sully's, where that nobleman was confined with the disorder which put an end to his life. Madame de Verneuil had recommended this man to me, but I had forgotten him again; pray let the Dukes of Sully and Mr. de Coulanges know this; Amiot is an intimate acquaintance of the latter; he had likewise the care of Madame de Louvois.

He seems to have a reasonable dislike to excessive blood-letting, and approves of the method of our Capuchins; he assures me that all my little complaints arise from the spleen, and that the waters of Bourbon are sovereign in those cases. He is a great advocate for those of Vichi; nevertheless he says he is persuaded that I shall find as much comfort from the use of these. As to the purging, he will give it me so gently, that I may almost say he will not give it me at all. He  
is



is of Alliot's opinion, that pumping is rather too violent a remedy, and more likely to injure the nerves than to do them service; and thinks that gentle purgatives with the warm bath, and the use of the waters inwardly, will be sufficient for me. The man talks very sensibly; he will manage me with great care and circumspection, and will give you a faithful account of his progress; for as he is going to settle at Paris, you may suppose that he would willingly make as many friends there as possible. Madame de Chaulnes' disorder is by no means to be neglected, these waters will do her service: we are lodged very comfortably, and near each other; but as for the place itself, one may say of it *that heaven never enriched it with a smile*\*; but providence seems to have conducted me hither by the hand. I always consult you in my own mind, and it has assured me that you are of opinion I could not have taken a more proper step. But, good God! how weary I am of this perpetually talking of myself! heaven be praised, I am now going to change the subject to you.

I have received your letter of Thursday, the 18th, by which I find, my dear, that you are going to Versailles; I perceive also what stops Mr. de Grignan at this juncture. I hope you believe that I am not so ridiculously occupied with myself as to neglect even for an instant to think of you, and all that relates to you; that is a thought which my heart is never found to be without; but as it has much to think of, so I think a great deal, but, Lord help me! very

\* *Qu'il n'eut jamais du ciel un regard amoureux.*

little to the purpose. I want much to know how Mr. de Grignan does, and how you yourself do; I am frightened to death lest you should catch any of these fevers that are going about at Versailles, where, I am told, hardly a house is free. Heaven preserve my dearest child! I embrace the Marquis; give one remembrance from me to Mr. and Madame de Coulanges; if they want to know any thing about me, they are perfectly well acquainted of whom to inquire. I know that Madame de Coulanges is going to settle at Brevannes; what pleasure it is to live in the country! I shall taste it in perfection when I get from hence.

It would surprise you to see the care Madame de Chaulnes takes of me; she sends you a thousand compliments, and is talking of you every minute; the *charming Countess* is as natural to her as any the most common expression; in a word, you are always present to us. I return you thanks, my dear, for your vegetable salt, and shall make use of it; in a word, my dear, you are very good to be thus thoughtful of your poor mama! it is not often that mothers meet with such attention; on the other hand, I believe it is as rare to find a daughter so well beloved by a mother as you are by me; but, however this may be, you make me infinitely happy, and I ought joyfully to suffer the little uneasinesses that are concomitant upon an affection so tender as mine.



## \* L E T T E R DCXI.

To the same.

*Bourbon, Thursday, 25 Sept. 1687.*

I HAVE received your letter of Monday the 22d, which gave me no small ease, my dear, as it let me know the excellent and prudent resolution you have taken in regard to this winter. I am pretty sure you will have business enough upon your hands, but you will have a good lawyer and an excellent landlord. I wish he may not put my nose out of joint; this winter will be the reverse of the last to you; it would be difficult indeed always to support the expence, but if you could it would be a great pleasure: but, for my part, I do not see how one can bear to be a dead weight upon one's friends; I am sure, was it in my power, I would be the first to set the contrary example. I acknowledge that his Majesty has been very gracious and condescending; but I want to know something more. God must direct all; you have stopped me from making any complaint, by putting me in mind of whom I complain. The bark has performed its usual miracles with regard to the King's disorder. The Marshallefs of Rochefort writes Madame de Nan-gis word of the Duke of Burgundy's illness, for which she appears extremely concerned.

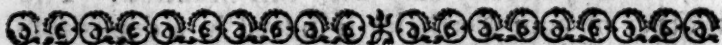
You

You desire to know how things go with me ; they are as well as can be wished. I have now taken the waters for two days, they fit very light and easy upon my stomach ; they made me a little giddy at first taking, but that is gone off ; so that, if I find them continue to agree with me, I shall not make use of those of Vichi, which are sent here in a day, and are mixed with these in such a manner that they seem to be but one and the same. Madame de Chaulnes and I are the most healthy patients in the place. Poor Madame de Nangis is really to be pitied, she has such violent cholicks, that they often throw her into convulsions. Mademoiselle d'Armentieres is in so weak a way that she seems just at death's door. Madame de Fourcy is just come from Vichi, in order to complete her cure, as she says, in this place ; and how do you think she does this ? Why, by sleeping three or four hours every day after dinner, during which time her leg becomes as limp as a rag ; when she wakes, she cannot stand upon them for another hour, and in this manner she goes on day after day, and, which is worse than all, seems perfectly easy with this situation. The brother of your Berthelot is indeed in a deplorable way, he is sunk into a lethargy, the remains of a dreadful fit of the apoplexy. It is one of the most disagreeable things of this place to have nothing but miserable objects before one's eyes ; some the baths cure, and some they do not. However, I have received so much benefit, that I have no reason to regret coming to a place where I am the happiest person in it. Madame de Chaulnes is much in the same way with me ; nothing can equal her tenderness for me, she really seems to be



more anxious about my health than her own, and she has sent for the waters from Vichi merely because she was the occasion of my not going thither; so that I may either take them or not, as I please: in my opinion, the waters here are much preferable, at least so all the physicians of this place say; but we shall see. It is certain that those who have taken them are to the full as well as they were at Vichi; especially Madame de Bel——. Therefore give yourself no uneasiness about me, my dear Countess; Amiot is not a little proud of having the Duchess and me for his patients, and hopes to gain some credit by us this winter.

I most heartily embrace Mr. de Grignan, all his concerns are mine, I find myself inseparably connected with him by every tender tie. I grieve at the miserable condition of the poor Chevalier. My dear Marquis, I love you with all my heart. And to conclude with you, my dearest child, I leave you to judge what I feel in relation to you.



\* L E T T E R DCXII.

To the Same.

*Bourbon, Saturday, 27 September, 1687.*

THERE are certain hours which we may give to writing in this place, and this is one. I received your's with all that joy and  
emo-

emotion you are so well acquainted with; for it is certain that you love me. There is now a young lady in this place, who has adopted the odd notion of loving her mother\*; but, tho' she says and does many pretty things in that way, she falls far short of you, my dear!

We have here a number of cripples, and other poor souls at death's door, who seek relief in the scalding waters of the wells, some with success, others without; but the worst of all is this, that numbers remain terribly tormented with apoplectic fits. I have sent for the waters of Vichi, in order to take them, as Mr. de Fagon's wife and many others have done; they are heated in a manner that pleases me, they have the same taste, and nearly the same strength as at Vichi; they answer their intent, as I experienced with great pleasure this morning. I shall continue them for a week, by Alliot's advice, and shall not be pumped, by Amiot's direction, the reasons of which he has already told you. I think it would not be amiss to send his letter to Alliot; in the mean time I shall proceed as I have hitherto done. On Saturday I shall resume the waters of this place, and indulge myself in its agreeable baths; and Amiot proposes to heat the water to a degree sufficient to make me sweat without any violence of operation. For my part, I leave every cock master of his own dunghill, not doubting but that a man of his experience must know what is best for me: I wish you would write a line or two, signifying the good opinion you have of

\* That is, Madame de Nangis, daughter of the Marshalls de Rochefort, and wife to the Marquis of Nangis.

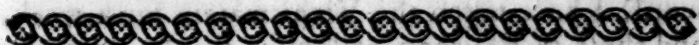
his skill; and pray do not give yourself any uneasiness, for you may expect to see me in a few days perfectly well.

It is my earnest prayer to heaven to preserve Mr. de Grignan and you, and that it will please God to encrease the Chevalier's stock of patience. Methinks you stand in need of the like, to undergo all that has happened to you; and if people dared to think at Bourbon, the affliction would give great uneasiness; but here, my dear, we are mere clock-work figures, we roll about the streets in our coaches, we receive and pay visits; but we give up all pretensions to having souls, as such a companion would interrupt the waters; we shall take up our souls again when we get to Paris.

You keep up so obligingly all the correspondence with our friends, that I need not desire you to remember poor Corbinelli now and then, and to love him as well as you know I love him; I heartily wish him that happiness, as the greatest that I think can befall him. Madame de Chaulnes is this moment come to see me, and is scolding me she cannot tell why, and embraces her charming Countess. All Bourbon is employed in writing to-day, to-morrow all Bourbon will be employed in a different way.

It is a kind of convent, every day brings its different exercise. You talk of the dews, child, where are we to find them? We must breathe a little air, for there are no dinners, no suppers, no merrymakings; however, I hope to regale myself a little this winter in our own snug inn.

\* L E T -



\*LETTER DCXIII.

To the Same.

*Bourbon, Tuesday, 7 October, 1687.*

SO then, you take it in your head to scold me, my dear Countess, instead of giving me joy of being better than I ever was in my life, and of having saved myself the trouble of a journey to Vichi. Have I not sent for the waters from that place? have they not had the desired effect of gently evacuating the humours? I no longer stand in need of those violent operations that I did some years ago.

Mr. Manfard is here in hopes of being restored, after the violent evacuations he went thro' at Vichi; many who come from that place are in the same way. It is true that during the week I took the Vichi waters, I found they did me service; but then I was obliged to have recourse to these, to set me to rights again, after the ruffle the others gave me. It is an universally received opinion in this place, that where there are no great quantity of humours to evacuate, the waters of Bourbon are of a mild and sanative quality, which cannot fail of restoring a weak constitution; they convey a balsamic nourishment through all the parts. As to the country, I do not pretend to bring it into comparison



with Vichi, which is a little paradise. But, in a word, I have taken the Vichi waters for a week, and those of Bourbon as long; in the intervals between taking them I have used de Lorme's powder, and find myself perfectly well; I have not the least appearance of any vapours, I look well, and am well. If there was any necessity of being pumped, Amiot, I am sure, would not have spared me. You are angry with me also for writing; why, my dear, it is one of my greatest pleasures, and I should die without this amusement; every one in this place writes. I scribbled half a dozen lines indeed to Madame de la Fayette; but do you call that writing?

Our weather here is tolerable. I am transported to hear that the Chevalier is well enough to join in the last melancholy farewell to poor Livri; it was all I desired, either to see you settled there, or at least able to go thither. We shall get to Paris by the 19th of this month, as we appointed; there I intend to embrace Madame de la Fayette, and Madame de Lavardin, and then set out with my dear girl for Livri, to breathe the fresh air and stretch my legs a little; this will put the finishing hand to the benefit I have received from the waters.

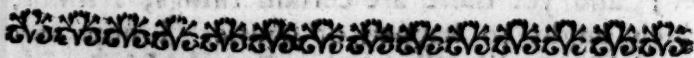
You may be sure it would give me infinite pleasure for you to come to Paris; but let me intreat you not to fatigue yourself by coming much farther; let us only meet again, and then we will pass all the time together that our destiny will allow us. But I dare not reckon too much upon any schemes that please me, lest providence should see fit to dispense things in a different manner;

ner; and yet there are certain things, I think, which ought to happen of course. I hope my friend Corbinelli will come to see us at Livri; we will make the most of these last moments, till some one comes and turns us out by the shoulders \*.

How do you think that writing to you can fatigue me, my dear? on the contrary, it is a great relief and comfort to me, it is my only delight. Pray make the Chevalier my most affectionate compliments; would to God he was as well as I am! Madame de Chaulnes has already taken her measures for setting out for Chaulnes, in three days after she returns to Paris. This is a natural effect of the life we lead here, every one is desirous to fly into the country for rest. Madame de Nangis is already gone to a seat of her husband's, that is about nine leagues from this place.

You talk of the baths of Vichi, they are nothing; these are far before them, for a thousand disorders. For my part, I am extremely well contented with my journey; I now know what was the matter with me, and that my apprehensions were much greater than my real disorders. If you love me, and are to be pleased with the care that is taken of me, how will you be able to repay the friendly attention of the Duchess of Chaulnes?

\* The abbey of Livri was vacant since the 23d of August, by the death of the Abbé Coulanges, Madame de Sévigné's uncle.



\* L E T T E R DCXIV.

To the Same.

*Bourbon, Thursday, 9 October, 1687.*

**Y**OU was in a very ill humour with me, my dear, when you wrote to me last; I know the source from whence it sprung, and I am sensible how much you love me; but, really, the injustice of your accusation gave me some uneasiness. You and Madame de la Fayette join in blaming me for not having left Madame de Chaulnes at Nevers. In answer to this, I have to tell you, in the first place, that it was not her fault I did not do so; but I aver, that I never took a better step than what I have done: in the second place, I do not stand so much in need of the waters of Vichi as I formerly did; I have made all the use of them that was necessary, by sending for them, and mixing them with these of Bourbon. I have had the benefit of the most delightful baths imaginable; and, in a word, I have gone through the whole course of medicines proper for me with an ease and regularity that I could never have done had not Madame de Chaulnes been with me. We shall set out from hence on Monday, after having made a stay of three weeks and one day exactly, during which time we have drank the waters fifteen days, bathed nine times, thrice taken physick, and two days we have rested. I de-  
fy

ff any thing to be better brought about than all this; she shews a regard and care of me almost equal to your's; she is intitled to the most grateful acknowledgments, and yet you look upon her as a person who has overturned the whole plan of my cure: for heaven's sake, my dear, embrace an opinion more consistent with justice and that love you bear me; and when we meet at Essonne, if you intend to meet us there, let me behold nothing but smiles of joy to see us return in such good health, and kind acknowledgments to the good Duchess for her care and friendship.

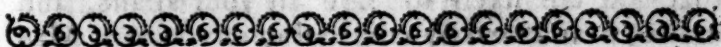
We intend to make two days from hence to Nevers, in order not to fatigue ourselves; Wednesday we shall leave Nevers, and the fifth day, which will be Sunday the 19th, we shall dine at Essonne, and sup at Paris. I should be very uneasy to cause you any trouble or fatigue, otherwise it would be a great pleasure to me, if you thought proper, to meet us at Essonne to dinner.

Amiot writes to you by this post, he is an excellent physician; but, besides him, there is a little apothecary in this place, who is the very quintessence of prudence, capacity, and experience; both of them concurred in assuring me there was no occasion for the pump; they were apprehensive it would disorder the system too much, and put the nerves in mind of something they were not at present inclinable to. In a word, they are justly held in the highest esteem by every one here, as persons who have honesty enough to condemn what they think is not right, even though they themselves may by mistake have at first prescribed it.



You say I write to all the world; I write to no one but you, child; for I do not call it writing, two short notes to Madame de la Fayette, and four lines in answer to Madame de Coulanges. But let us now speak a word of the weather, it is a kind of enchantment, it is as if you had made it yourself on purpose for me; it is as warm as in the midst of the summer; this fine weather will make you love poor Livri; I hope you are there, the very thought gives me pleasure. If you will wait for me there, and only send me your coach, I will be with you in an instant from Paris. If you will come to Paris, to meet me there, it will be a different thing; or you may come only half way between Paris and Essonne: but, in short, do just what you think will cause you the least fatigue; however, if you should absolutely resolve to push as far as Essonne, do not however travel fourteen leagues in a day; but lie on Saturday night at Savigni, and on Sunday you may come at your ease and dine at Essonne.

Madame de Chaulnes desires me to make you a thousand compliments in her name, but they are to be taken for real expressions of friendship; and she has nothing so much at heart as to give you a good account of my poor person. We shall hear a thousand stories of Brittany that have diverted us extremely; but the chief of all our pleasure is, that we shall set out on Monday, after having punctually observed all the ceremonial of Bourbon.



L E T T E R DCXV.

To the Same.

*Milli, Saturday night, 18 October, 1687.*

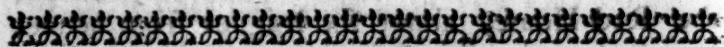
I Have received your letter, my dear, and I find it full of marks of your affectionate love and remembrance. I wrote to you from the Red-House, about six leagues from hence, by which you will find that there would have been some difficulty in getting Madame de Chaulnes to have taken Fontainebleau\* in our way, because there are so many people there of her acquaintance that it would have been impossible for her to have concealed herself. But you do not say any thing to me of Livri, cruel creature! will you shut me out from that retreat so necessary to me? I shall expect you on Monday, since you say it shall be so; I would willingly make you much greater sacrifices, otherwise I should have been glad to have seen my two good friends (la Fayette and Lavardin) and to have set out directly afterwards for Livri; but this I shall not now think of, but wait for you with the utmost eagerness to embrace you. If you was to be as expeditious as ourselves, I should not wait for you long. I hope you will send la Brie back to me to-morrow to Essonne.

\* Where the court then was, and Madame de Grignan along with it.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dearest, I am rejoiced that you are likely to settle all your affairs, and make your court by continuing at court. Madame de Chaulnes embraces you, and exults not a little in the excellent state of health with which she will deliver your mama into your arms. Embrace Madame de Vins for me, but do not suffer her to steal your heart, tho' it would be pardonable if you did.

N. B. *The mother and daughter were not separated again from each other, till the beginning of October 1688.*



### \* L E T T E R DCXVI.

To the Same.

*Paris, Friday, 8 October, 1688.*

**H**ERE is a distracting rain, just, my dear, as you are going to descend that filthy mountain of Rochepot! How numberless are the vexations of those who love with any degree of fervency! we cannot love heroically, notwithstanding the example of heroism below\*: there is no knowing you without attaching one's-self to you with the greatest tenderness. Our poor hero is still dreadfully afflicted with the

\* Meaning the Chevalier de Grignan, who had an apartment in the hotel de Caravalet, Madame de Sévigné's house, at Paris,

gout, it is a perfect martyrdom. There are several persons of wit and learning who constantly visit him, with a view to divert his painful moments with the news of the day, and other topics; but still he suffers greatly.

Our young Marquis could not have been at the opening of the trenches, for Mr. de Vauban would not wait the arrival of the Dauphin, on account of the rains: we are still persuaded, that in a very few days your mind will be set at ease.

The Prince of Orange has declared himself Protector of the Religion of the Church of England, and has demanded to have the young Prince\* put in his hands, in order to bring him up in that faith. This is a great event, several of the English lords have joined him. You know that la Trousse has taken Avignon†. Madame de Coulanges, who runs over with money, has lent Mademoiselle de Meri a thousand franks; we expect that lady here every day. Mr. de la Trousse‡ will very readily repay them.

I am very well pleased; my dear, that you approve of the good Abbé de Bigorre's coming to our house, his company has proved no small amusement to me. We entertain ourselves

\* James, Prince of Wales, son of James II. born the 20th June, 1688; but better known afterwards by the name of the Pretender.

† Some disputes that had happened between the court of France and that of Rome, had obliged Lewis XIV. to seize upon the county of Venaissin, belonging to the pope.

‡ He was brother to Mademoiselle de Meri.



hitherto with frequent conversations upon the state of our affairs; in short, I find all the conversation that a sound understanding and a generous heart could afford me; for, the more one knows the Chevalier, the more one must esteem and love him. I have no room to ask him if you love me, for I am persuaded of it by a thousand instances; but, without questioning him upon that subject, he gave me a thousand enchanting testimonies of your affection. We eat together, and keep a very good table. The philosophy of Corbinelli is to come to-night; we have written over all our apartments,

*Here freedom reigns, here each one acts at will.*

I have seen Madame de Fontenilles, she has lately lost her mother, and seems swallowed up in grief; you will judge the impression this made upon me. Her poor mother died in a shocking way, crying out in all the agonies of despair, and terrified with the thought of taking the last sacraments; she did however receive them, but with a dreadful and gloomy silence. Her son and Alliot arrived just two hours after she gave up the ghost.

Farewel, my dearest, we know not what to do without you; every-one crying out,

*Nought can repair the blessings I have lost\*.*

We are surrounded with your pictures; The Princess is certainly very beautiful;

\* Rien ne peut réparer les biens que j'ai perdus.

but

but we still sigh for a certain person which is at present in the midst of the sloughs of the mountains of Rochepot.



\* L E T T E R DCXVII.

To the Same.

*Paris, Monday, 11 October, 1688.*

I Have received your two letters from Joigni and Auxerre; the road to the former makes me shudder to behold it; for, my dearest Countess, I see you in my mind's eye wheresoever you go, and the melancholy that oppresses you weighs me down by sympathy. You would certainly have been much more at your ease here, you would have sooner received news from Mr. de St. Pouanges, who has promised the Chevalier to take a particular care of your son. Here you would have known by this time that a certain little fort, which might have occasioned our friends some trouble, has been taken before his Highness \* arrived. Here too you would have learned, that, on account of this prince being to go into the trenches, Mr. de Vauban has doubled all those precautions which he generally takes for the safety and security of the besiegers. You would have known that it was not the regiment of Champagne, but that of Pi-

\* The Dauphin, who was to make the siege of Philippsburg, having Marshal Duras as general under him, and the famous engineer Mr. de Vauban to conduct the operations of the siege.

cardy,

cardy, which opened the trenches, at which however no one was wounded; and, in fine, you would have seen that all the good women of these parts, who have husbands, brothers, sons, cousins, or what you please, all embarked in the same affair, do nevertheless eat, drink, laugh, sing, visit, receive visits, chat, and re-chat, all in full expectation of again beholding the objects of their affection. It is a sensible affliction to me, that, instead of doing like others, you should hide yourself from all the world, and maintain a cruel tête-à-tête with a *dragon*\*, that preys on your very vitals, without a single object to divert you, starting at your own imagination, and thinking every thing that is possible to happen for the worst; surely nothing can be so insupportably distressful as such a situation. My dearest child, let me entreat you, if it is possible, to have pity on yourself, and believe me you are in greater danger than your son; and pray follow the advice of Mr. de Grignan, Mr. de Carcassonne, and the Chevalier, who have all written to you upon this subject. I would not mention the letter your son wrote to you, there were some passages in it so affecting that—— but these are not objects to be dwelt on.

Give yourself no uneasiness about what I have written to Mr. de la Garde, every thing will go as you could wish; and it will only serve to encrease the esteem he already has for you, when he shall perceive what a sacrifice you are willing to make, in order to live upon good terms

\* A term Madame de Sévigné and her daughter frequently made use of to express melancholy, or vapours. See the former volumes of these letters.

with your relations : so discharge this from the number of your uneasinesses. Madame de Meri occupies your apartment ; it is not however very agreeable to find the door always shut against one with an *head-ach*, or an *out-of-order* ! Ah ! how did our lovely countess fill every place ! how did she enliven all around her ! Corbinelli's philosophy is still in that room you know of ; but we see it less than in the public square. All the world is taken up with news ; the good Abbé Bigorre is in the height of his triumph ; he will be here in three or four days. I have already acquainted you that the Chevalier and I eat together, and that an unbounded freedom reigns betwixt us ; but the use we make of it is, to be almost always together. Our way of thinking is so very much alike, our interests and our feelings are in such exact unison, that it would be doing ourselves a violence to keep asunder.

Madame de Coulanges has lost her brother, it is said that the Cordeliers killed him ; but I insist upon it that it was death. Yesterday I saw my widows, who have such a love and esteem for you that you may safely reckon them in the number of your real friends. Madame de la Fayette is always the same. Her son writes her word, that he was a long time with your's, but that they were obliged to part at Metz ; and that is all.

How affectionately, how warmly is your presence regretted and desired in that same chamber ! the coffee takes its walks thither regularly every morning ; and it has been always so much my fate to be the last served, that I cannot  
even



even obtain the preference over the Chevalier ; but you, my dearest girl, appear there no more : that is the death-stroke to us all. Adieu, my ever lovely, there is no happiness for me without you.



\* L E T T E R DCXVIII.

To the Same.

*Paris, Wednesday, 13 October, 1688.*

**W**E live in daily expectation of hearing from you, we follow you step by step ; you should have wrote to us from Châlons ; to-morrow you will be at Lyons ; I tell it you, for fear you should not know it. It is a real ease to me to write to you, for Brittany correspondence is so fatiguing that I am glad to turn from it towards my dear child. There is great reason to believe that Philipsburg will not keep us much longer in our present state of doubt and uncertainty. You will see by the letter the Chevalier has sent you, that our little Marquis arrived there in perfect health, and without being the least fatigued ; you will see what care will be taken of him, and you will find that his Highness has surrounded the place without receiving any fire from the garrison : in a word, that the trenches are so well disposed, that, in all human probability, every thing will succeed to our wishes.

In a word, my dear, you say very right, this is a strange October ! I never passed  
such

such an one. Our dear Marquis never before run any risk in this month, but that of missing a partridge or a hare, and that always by accident; but this, this month! I have not only my own uneasinesses, but feel your's also in the most lively manner. I know that merciless imagination of your's; but how you will support such long-sufferings heaven only knows.

We are in hopes that the Prince of Orange has taken his measures wrong, and that the King of England will give him a warm reception, and beat him handsomely. He has had a conference with his nobles, he has left those at liberty who are not inclined to serve him, he has strengthened the attachment of those who are faithful to him; he has published a general liberty of conscience, and has given the command of his troops to the count de Roze, who, being a zealous protestant, is very agreeable to the English—In short, my dear, what shall I say to you? You heed me not, I am well assured; your thoughts are wholly engrossed by your son, nor can I blame you for it: accordingly we live daily in hopes of giving you the most perfect contentment by acquainting with the reduction of Philipsburg, and that the Marquis is safe and sound. In the mean time, let me beseech you, my dearest child, to take care of yourself, if such a thing is possible; do not waste your body in unavailing pinings, your eyes with continual weeping! Have courage, pluck up your spirits; I beg this of you a thousand and a thousand times.



## LETTER DCXIX.

To the Same.

*Paris, Sunday, 15 Oct. 1688.*

**I**T is now eight days that we have been in expectation of hearing from you, my dear child; you cannot think how tedious the time appears. I am just returned from a visit to Madame de la Fayette. The 11th of this month she received a letter from her son, who acquaints her that our child is very well: the chevalier has told you all that he knows, he is in despair at not being able to go to Fontainebleau: you would sooner receive news from him, but we must submit to what God pleases. Madame de Lavaradin has been under great concern about Jarzé, who, as he was passing through the trenches, had his hand carried off at the wrist, by a cannon-ball, which obliged him to have his arm immediately cut off above the elbow; this is a melancholy circumstance for a young man like him! Nevertheless nothing can exceed the precaution that Mr. de Vauban has taken for the security of his people; the Dauphin goes the first into the trenches, and the duke and the prince de Conti are not wanting on their parts; but it is forbidden under pain of imprisonment that any of the volunteers presume to follow them, or quit the respective regiments

to

to which they belong \*. All will go well, child, so in the name of God be careful of yourself, and take a dose or two of that patience that we all live upon here; continual uneasiness is as prejudicial as it is useless.

The Chevalier and I took a walk to Vincennes yesterday; you will readily conceive the subject of our thoughts and discourse. I write this to you from his apartment; he is just now going to send away his packet, so my dearest Countess I must bid you farewell. I cannot very well accustom myself to be without you, and my love for you is such as I believe very few, if any one, can equal.



L E T T E R DCXX.

To the Same.

*Paris, Monday, 18 Oct. 1688.*

WE received your letters from Chalons, my dear, the very next day after the complaints we made of having been eight days without hearing from you. It was a long time, and the heart suffers by uncertainty; accordingly we feel for you on account of not having any news from Philipsburg. Hitherto your son has conti-

\* The Marquis de Grignan was now making his first campaign in the quality of volunteer in the regiment of Champagne, of which his father, the Count de Grignan, had been colonel.



nued safe and well, and behaves like an angel; he hears the cannon thundering round him, and the balls flying about him, without the least emotion; he has mounted in the trenches, and sends his uncle an account of the siege as if he was an old officer; he is the darling of every one, he has frequently the honour of dining at the Dauphin's table, who talks to him familiarly, and admits him to do many little offices about his person. Mr. Beauvillier caresses him like his own child, and St. Pouanges—but you will find a full account of all these matters in the letters which the Chevalier sends you. I only mention these circumstances in order to give some degree of merit to my own scrawl. But now to return to our journey.

Such a cursed road! Indeed! indeed! my good Count, you ought to blush for what you have done. I knew very well that same mountain of Rochepot was a terrible precipice, the road over it covered with large and loose flints; but at length this cursed road, as I called it before, is passed, and we will come back another way, if God so pleases, as I earnestly hope he will. We fancy that you will take water at the Rhone as this day, after having called at Thesée\*. We have most shocking weather here! the poor Chevalier is still very much troubled with the weakness in his legs, though he is free from pain; this gives him no little concern, and he stands in need of all his resolution to bear with a condition so very contrary to what he calls his duty; he cannot get to Fontainebleau, where a

\* An ancient seat belonging to the family of Chateaufneuf de Rochebonne.

thou-

thousand affairs call him. I admire how your  
 health is proof against the continual uneasiness  
 you suffer. It is a miracle ! endeavour to conti-  
 nue it, and do not exhaust yourself by not sleep-  
 ing in the night, nor eating in the day ; but who  
 can command their imagination ? It grieves me to  
 hear that you fall away ; I hate the airs of Grig-  
 nan in that case, for I love every thing in you,  
 even your looks, which, however, are not the least  
 objects of my affection. You have a mind that  
 cannot be too much admired ; however, have  
 some compassion of your picture, and do not let  
 it turn out that of another person ; refresh your-  
 self at la Garde ; for my part, I must give you  
 my sentiments, which are, that if the situation of  
 Grignan, a place I have heard spoken of, should  
 be such as not to agree with you, and that the  
 moving of the rocks there should occasion as un-  
 healthy an air as stirring the ground at Mainte-  
 non \* has done, this would be the part I would  
 take, without giving myself the least concern,  
 without scolding any one, or without complaining.  
 I would very coolly desire Mr. de la Garde to let  
 me stay at his house with Paulina your own wo-  
 man and two footmen, till the other place was  
 decent and habitable. This is, I say, what I  
 would do without scruple, and without making  
 any noise about it, which would save you a num-  
 ber of troublesome visits, as people would readily  
 suppose that a house that was repairing, as your's  
 is, was no place to receive company.

You desire I would inform you of  
 the state of my health, and of the kind of life I

\* See note to Letter DLXXXIII.

lead; in answer to which, I have to tell you, first, that I have found my blood a little heated, have had some bad nights, and have shed plenty of tears, things which are not over and above good for the health, and accordingly I am under no small uneasiness about your's; however, by the help of a proper regimen, I am pretty well recovered. As to my way of life you know it already, it is passed chiefly in the lower apartment \*, where I am, as it were, fixed by destiny; however, I strive neither to be troublesome nor disagreeable, and, if I am not mistaken, my presence is rather pleasing. We are continually talking of you and your's. I shall go presently to pay a visit to Mad. de la Fayette and Mad. de Lavardin, where I shall still hear of you. The other day I was at Madame de Mouci's, yesterday at the Marchioness d'Huxelles. There is not a creature in Paris all day long; in the evening, indeed, they just come home time enough to go to bed, and the next morning, as soon as up, away to Fontainebleau; thus our lives whizz away as fast as the time. Madame de Meri is very well pleased with us, and we with her. We have the Abbé Bigorre, who is indeed the most agreeable and least troublesome of all our guests. Corbinelli is in Normandy with the lieutenant of the police, and will not return till next month. Did I tell you that the Chevalier and I went the other day to Vincennes; we had a long chat, and I walked a great deal, but all this was in the melancholy way, I need not tell you why.

\* Where the Chevalier de Grignan lived during his stay in the Hotel de Carnavalet, which was Madame de Sévigné's house at Paris.

*The same day.*

My letter was sealed, when, lo ! I received your's *from on board the boat below Magon* ; all the expressions of attention therein enchant me as usual ; if I was not sensible of the excess of my love for you, I should burst at my stupidity, and be almost persuaded that you know more than myself on that head. You may assure yourself that I shall not quit Paris either while the fate of Philippsburg remains undetermined, or while the Chevalier continues here, for these are two things which naturally engross my whole attention. In the mean time be under no apprehension that I will suffer myself to be starved. We still continue to eat, my dear, though it is the bread of affliction. The ideas of my dear child prevails and enlivens the scene. Never sure could any person profit more by living under the same roof with you than I have done ; how delightfully did our mornings pass ! We used to be two hours together before other people were awake. I cannot reproach myself with having lost either time or opportunity of being with you. I was too greedy of that pleasure, and I never left you without an earnest desire to return to you, nor ever returned without feeling a sensible pleasure at seeing you again, and passing the evening with you. God forgive me this weakness, so much earnestness was due to him alone. Your ethics are equally just and good.

Madame de Vins has been under some uneasiness about her husband ; however, she has at length received a letter from him, he is



safe at present, for he is at the siege of Philipsburg, he was obliged to pass through some very dangerous woods, and his friends were a considerable time without hearing from him. If the air and noise of Grignan prove troublesome to you, go to la Garde; this is still my advice. A thousand kind remembrances wait upon all your Grignans, and I am certain Mr. de la Garde will be one of the number. Paulina, my dear, how do you do? She's a happy creature to see you and love you as she does! No one better understands than myself the kind of attachment one has for insensible, and consequently ungrateful things; witness my folly on account of Livri! You have taken this disease from me.



## L E T T E R DCXXI.

To the Same.

*Paris, Wednesday, 20 October, 1688.*

WE have received your packet from Thesée, of which you give us a most agreeable description. One would not have expected to find so much politeness and good order on the top of a mountain; the lady of the castle\* appears truly noble, lovely, and worthy of being beloved. You did very well to answer for Corbinelli that he cannot shake off his chains. I am afraid with all this splendid outside, this

\* Theresa Achemer de Montell, Countess of Rochebonne, and sister of Mr. de Grignan.

poor woman is not truly happy ; I pity her, and hate the cause of her troubles. But let me now turn the discourse to you, my dear.

You have, heaven be praised ! passed that same Rhone, so proud, so restless, and so turbulent ! I fancy if an alliance was to be made between it and the Durance, when the latter is in its airs, there would be curious work ! We are impatient to have your letters from la Garde. Does your youth and your health still hold out against your dragons, your restless nights and anxious days ? It is the thought of those that alarms me, for I know nothing so fatal, and all this happens to you for having moved so far from the centre of news, and giving too great a loose to your imagination : were you with us you would, like us, know what passes almost every day, and be, like us, satisfied that his little generalship is perfectly skilled in his new profession ; he writes with a great deal of life and vivacity ; he has twice mounted guard in the trenches, he has helped to carry the fascines, and he is in perfect health. The Chevalier is delighted with him, and has told him in a letter, that “ he no longer looks upon him as a young lad and his nephew, but shall hereafter stile him his comrade.” This will overpay the young hero for all he has done. The worst is now passed, for it is supposed that the regiment of Champagne will not mount again in the trenches. What joy will you feel, my dear Countess, when I shall write you word, *Philippsburg is taken, and your son is safe* ; then, if it pleases God, you will once more breathe at freedom, and me also, for it is not to be believed that any one can enjoy life in your present situation. Our little Marquis dis-

rects all his letters under cover to me, and excuses himself in the prettiest manner imaginable, by, "Madam, I hope you will pardon the freedom." In a word, all goes as well as you can wish; however, we wait to hear from you with all that anxiety which true regard inspires. I embrace Mr. de Grignan and the prelates who are with you, and Mr. de la Garde, who is in that place, and Paulina who is in the other; but, good God! what an I talking of! you are all together at your seat. Well! and how do you find yourselves? how goes on the trowel? Methinks we hear Mansard \* hither, calling for the coadjutor.

We have the Prince of Orange on our coasts, his fleet all dismasted, and his fresh water all spoiled; a Squadron that he sent to tamper with the commander of the English fleet would have been severely handled if they had dared to come within gun-shot, but the wind being right in their faces, and had dispersed six or seven of them as they were returning back, the King † has conciliated the minds of all his subjects, by giving a little indulgence in point of religion. God has hitherto shewn himself his protector. Adieu, my dearest, I know not what to say to you on the score of my affection; I want words, or find them too weak, to express the full force of my sentiments.

\* Master builder to the King.

† James II. of England.



LETTER DCXXII.

To the Same.

*Paris, Friday, 22 October, 1688.*

I begin by your dear son; nothing is so easy to divine as your sentiments, and do you think we have not the same? But we enjoy a happiness that it was not your fault you did not enjoy also, namely, that of having fresh news every day, whereas you are forced to languish in expectation of it a whole week. We know that the Dauphin is in the trenches every day, and that the other day he was quite covered over with dust raised by a cannon-ball that fell a few paces from him. You will be able to judge as well as ourselves, if these trenches have been made proper for the reception of a King's son; the regiment of Champagne, however, will not be put to hard duty. By this packet you will receive a letter from Mr. du Plessis, that will shew you how many excellent governors your son has about him. We shall find him at his return quite another person. I build my hopes upon the Chevalier's opinion, who thinks the place cannot hold out much longer, and that as Vauban is sure of being master of it, he will not hurry matters, but take even more care of the men than he is accustomed to do, and yet you know very well how tender he is of hazarding their lives without pressing occasion. The Dauphin is adored by the whole army, he is



liberality itself; he provides for the wants of all the wounded, he has sent three hundred Louis d'ors to the Marquis de Nesle \*, he furnishes those with baggage who has lost their own, he distributes gifts amongst the common men, he writes to the King in praise of all the officers, and recommends them to his Majesty's good graces; in a word, he gives a great deal, because, to use his own words, he finds many objects: the King reads his letters in public, the Chevalier triumphs not a little on this occasion, and cries, "Well! is not this just as it should be? It is no more than what I expected." In short, my dear, our little man is not a little lucky to have made his first campaign under such a prince; and, my dear, I am certain, that, notwithstanding all the uneasiness you may labour under, you would not, for a great deal, have your son at home with you. The circumstance of finding himself in the midst of all the officers who served in his uncle's regiment, ought to be a great satisfaction to you;—but I could talk on this subject till to-morrow. Let us now turn the subject.

Indeed you make me blush by the excess of affection you express for me, not that I can charge myself for being behind hand with you in this respect, but that I think no one has a title to your regard but your son, so long as the siege of Philipsburg lasts. Leave all thoughts of me, therefore, and cease to overwhelm me with your love, for how shall I make a return, otherwise than by saying to you, "All that I have I give

\* Louis de Mailly, he died some time after at Spelres, of the wound he received at the siege of Philipsburg.

unto you." Pray write to your brother, for indeed he deserves it; write to him, therefore, after Philippsburg is taken I mean, and in such a manner as to shew that you are satisfied with him, as I am and ought to be.

The Chevalier and I are still fast friends, but do not let this awaken any jealousy in you: we love each other in you, through you, and for you. I know not what you mean by your humours, you have none but what gives us infinite pleasure, and we cannot sufficiently expatiate on the noble and just way of thinking with which heaven has blessed you; this furnishes us with an inexhaustible fund of conversation. He is still anxious to go to Fontainebleau, but his legs will not serve him; as for my part, I enjoy a perfect state of health; heaven preserve your's to you, my dear, for, say what you will, I shall never think you perfectly well while the present cause of anxiety subsists.

I fancy you found the poor Cardinal de Bouillon very dejected; notwithstanding all the beauties of his retreat; it must have been a great pleasure to him to see you again. I return him a thousand thanks for his kind remembrance, and to morrow I shall make all my widows happy with your's. We are going to bid farewell to Mad. de Mouci, she is preparing for her usual journey, she desired me the other day to embrace you in her name. Madame de Lavardin will be rejoiced at the complaisance of Madame de Rochebonne, she had this affair greatly at heart, and indeed it was but reasonable to let her have the care of her little nephews, of whom she is so fond.

Mr. de la Garde has written to me like a man who has an infinite deal of esteem for you, and who is perfectly of our way of thinking. You cannot make too much advantage of his talents and friendship. We live upon very good terms with Mademoiselle de Meri, as well as with the Abbé Bigorre, whose company we have not so often as we could wish. Corbinelli is still in Normandy with the Lieutenant of the police.

Yesterday a stag killed the horse of one of the king's grooms, whose name I do not remember, and wounded the man himself dangerously; the grandson of St. Herom, as he was riding neck or nothing with the Count de Toulouse, was thrown from his horse, and lay speechless three hours. He is now better.



## LETTER DCXXIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Monday, 25 October, 1688.

THE impatience which we are under to hear from you, which makes us even send to meet the post-boy on the road, and the joy that we feel when we hear, that, notwithstanding your disquietude, you still continue in good health, seems in some measure to entitle us to the kind care you take to satisfy us on all occasions; and you may judge by the need we have for such a comfort, how

how greatly we hold ourselves obliged to you for your punctuality. I always speak in the plural, *we*, for the Chevalier's sentiments and mine are so much alike, that I know not how to separate them. But now a word of Phillipsburg.

You will receive a letter from your son, of the 18th instant, who was then perfectly well, and you will find by what Mr. du Plessis says of him, that he is not likely to bring any disgrace upon his family. But here admire with me the disposition of Providence, the rain prevented his regiment from being present at the most glorious, and at the same time the hottest action, that has been since the commencement of the siege; it was the attacking a hornwork which our troops carried the 19th, the day after he wrote his letter, and in which service the Marquis d'Harcourt, marechal de camp, the Count de Guiche, and the youngest son of the Prince of Tingri, the Count d'Estrees, and several more whom we know, distinguished themselves greatly. Courtin's son is mortally wounded; the Marquis d'Huxelles has received a slight hurt, and poor Bordage paid for all two days before. The King has given his regiment to the Duke de Maine, and has promised Bordage's son another, with a pension of a thousand crowns. The two princes, and all the young volunteers, are at their wit's end, at not having been present at this fine entertainment, but it happened not to be their day. They were obliged, in a manner, to tie the Dauphin neck and heels, to prevent him going into the trenches. Vauban took him round the waist, and forced him out of them, together with Monsieur Beauvillier. In a word, this prince



is the darling of the soldiers \*; he begs regiments for some, and presents for others; he throws his money by handfuls amongst the wounded and the needy \*. It is thought the place cannot hold out long after that lodgment we have made. The governor being confined to his bed by a fit of sickness, and the officer who commanded in his stead being taken prisoner, it is hoped and believed, that no other person will take upon himself to play such a losing game. The Chevalier makes me laugh by saying in a breath, that he is rejoiced that the Marquis was not present at the action, and is in despair that he had not an opportunity of distinguishing himself; in short, he wishes that he was just as safe as himself, and yet, at the same time, that his reputation as a soldier was as well established as his; but we must have a little patience; however, let us hope, my dear, that every thing will succeed according to our wishes, and you again behold your dear child perfectly safe.

I find you was extremely well received at La Garde, and at length, by mere dint of moving on, are got to Grignan. You will let us know how you find yourself there, and how that poor substance, which thinks, and thinks so strongly, has been able to support its fair and delicate form in such excellent order, amidst so violent an agitation. You have made one distinction more than your father Descartes ever did.

But now, my dear, I must acquaint you that death has been more busy here than even

\* Who, during this siege, gave him the name of *Louis le Hardi*, or *Louis le Bold*.

at the siege of Philipsburg. Poor La Chaife\*, who was so fond of you, who had so much learning, and who displayed it so well in his life of St. Louis, is lately dead in the country of a fever. Mr. Du Bois is sensibly affected by this loss. Madame de Longueval, the canon †, or canones, which you please, is also dead of a quinsy; she entertained an irreconcilable hatred to our Montataire ‡. It gives me concern that any one should carry such sentiments with them into another world. You see how death goes about, picking up those whom God chuses to remove from hence.

Madame de Lavardin made me a thousand compliments for you yesterday, as did Madame d'Huxelles, and Madame de Mouci, as did Mademoiselle Rochefoucauld, whom we have received into the number of our widowhood. I likewise include Madame de la Fayette; but as she was not at Madame de Mouci's yesterday, I mention her separately. Nothing can equal the esteem all these good bodies express for you.

Farewel, my dearest child, we are divided between our attention to philosophy and to you, for these are the two only objects of our thoughts at present.

\* John Filleau de la Chaife, author of a Life of St. Louis, which was greatly esteemed. He was brother to Mr. de St. Martin, author of a Translation of Don Quixote.

† Madame de Longueval, Canones of Remiremont, was known in the world under the title of the Canon [or Male Canones]; she was sister to the Marshal d'Etrees.

‡ Mary de Rabutin, Marchioness de Montataire, who had for a long time carried on an obstinate law-suit against Madame de Longueval.



## LETTER DCXXIV.

To the Same.

*Paris, Tuesday, 26 October, 1688.*

**O**H, what a letter, my dear! it well deserves that I should come back here on purpose to receive it as I did. At length, then, you are got safe to Grignan, and are in perfect health; and such is my fate, that tho' you are removed at the distance of half the globe from me, I must rejoice at it. Perhaps it may please heaven that ere long I shall again embrace you; let me live in that pleasing thought. You draw me a very pleasing picture of Paulina. I know her again, she is not at all changed, as Mr. de Grignan would have made us believe she was. She is a sweet creature, and well deserving of being loved. She adores you, and the absolute submission to your will, even in the midst of her joy, at seeing you again, by which she is ready to quit you again if you think proper, at once engages my pity and concern; nor can I forbear admiring the power she has over herself. Was I in your place, I should be loth to part with such an agreeable companion, who will at once furnish you with amusement and occupation. I would make her work at her needle, read books of taste, would argue with her, and sound the depth of her capacity. I would consult with her in a friendly and intimate manner, for, believe me, you will never have

have reason to be tired of that child's company; on the contrary, she may be of great use to you. In short, I should make the most of her, and would not punish myself by depriving myself of that comfort.

I am very glad that the Chevalier speaks well of me; my self-love is concerned in keeping his good graces; if he is fond of my company, I, in return, can never have too much of his, and I think it is a mark of a good taste to be desirous of cultivating his esteem. I know not how you can say that your humour is a cloud which hides and obscures the affections you have for me. If such a thing has been in former times, you have for many years last past totally removed that veil, and you no longer conceal from me any part of the most perfect and tender affection that one person can have for another; heaven, my dear, will reward you for it in your own children, who will love you, not in the same manner, as perhaps they may not be capable of it, but at least to the utmost of their abilities, and we can desire no more.

You represent Mr. de Carcassonne's building as a thing that represents a body without a soul, wanting life, and all the nerves of war. I fancy the coadjutor will not be less wanting. My God, what are they about! but I'll say no more. It would be well, however, if there was some end to all this, and that they would relieve you from the noise and confusion with which you are at present surrounded.

They say that poor Jarzé is dead of his wounds. The siege of Philippsburg will soon be at an end, and you will then rejoice that your son

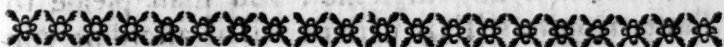


son was there ; it is like the Candy voyage. The Marchioness d'Huxelles seems perfectly indifferent about the slight wound which her son has received ; but these two are neither friends nor relations to each other ; you and I are not happy, or unhappy enough to be the same. The Marchioness is very thoughtful of Mr. de la Garde\*, the good effects of which you will experience. She has a collection of letters that were wrote to the Venetian ambassador, which are reckoned admirable in their kind.

We have had most terrible weather for some time past, but every one is rejoiced, as it somewhat frustrates the designs of the Prince of Orange ; I do not think the Chevalier will go to Fontainebleau at last. I intend to make a journey to Brevannes in order to stretch my legs a little, but this will not be till after Philipsburg is taken, which holds out longer than was expected, and gives me some little uneasiness. The Chevalier and I have taken another trip to Vincennes ; it is a delightful retreat, for there is not a living creature to be seen there.

Dispose of my friendship, my compliments, my love, my embraces, amongst those you shall think proper, for I know not whom you have with you ; but be sure forget not my Paulina, prepare her to love me, and I beg you will, upon reading this, give her a kiss from me. I am willing that she should be indebted to me for once for that pleasure. I cannot tell how, my dear, to put up with not seeing you below stairs as usual.

\* We have observed in a note to a former letter, that the Marchioness d'Huxelles had entered into a regular intercourse of news with Mr. de la Garde.



L E T T E R DCXXV.

To the Same.

*Paris, Tuesday, 29 October, 1688.*

WE are impatiently waiting for letters from you this evening, and in truth most of our time is taken up in writing to each other; Sunday alone is a day of respite. All our conversation turns upon you, and you can never receive truer praise than what is given you by all those who have had an opportunity of observing the many important things you have done for your family, but we are particularly charmed with the affair of the law-suit. I would say more, but the fear of hurting your modesty stops my pen, and I shall only say as Voiture does to the prince: If you knew with what little concern or fear of offending you we give into praising you here, you would be obliged to confess that we sin with our eyes open, and consequently that not one of your many amiable qualities is lost upon us. We earnestly hope that you will infuse some portion of them into your daughter; you cannot do any thing more advantageous for her; acquaint her, then, with what is proper for her to do, in like manner as I did by your son; there is no doubt to be made that she will quickly profit by your advice; by the answers she makes, she appears to have no common share of wit and vivacity, which, added to the earnest desire she shews of pleasing

pleasing you, will make her a pretty mass of wax, that will take any impression you shall please to stamp upon it. This cannot fail of affording you great amusement, and is an occupation truly worthy of you both in the eyes of God and man.

It is our opinion, that if Mr. de Grignan is to make any stay at Avignon, it would not be amiss for you to accompany him thither, in order to avoid the trouble and expence of double visits; but, my dear, we are all sensible how random all kind of advice at such a distance must necessarily be, and are assured that you will take such measures as are most proper. The Chevalier is still bad in his right hand, and therefore I offered myself to be his secretary.

I have sent you letters from your son of the twenty-second of this month; you will find great comfort in the care there is taken to preserve a life so precious to you; you will also see how these two volunteers suffered for their vapouring; fair and softly goes far. Write a line or two to Mr. Courtin; he has lost his son, who was killed by one of our own parties in the night-time, mistaking him for an enemy.

Adieu, my ever-lovely. I was yesterday at Madame de la Fayette's, where the Princess came in just as we were talking of a compliment by one of the courtiers to the King, who said, "Your majesty kills wolves like his highness, and his highness takes towns like your majesty." If this same Philippsburg was but off our hands, we could tell you a thousand merry stories. I embrace all the Grignans. I think Paulina is greatly advanced

vanced to read the *Metamorphoses*; she is now fairly rid of the *Young Woman's Guide*; take my advice then, my dear, and boldly put into her hands the *Moral Essays*.



\* L E T T E R DCXXVI.

To the Same.

*Paris, 1 November (All-Saints Day) 1688.*

IT is so long since I passed this holiday here, that I am at a loss to account for my being here. We shall this evening have music upon the bells, which will highly delight Corbinelli, and which I shall bear with, because I have not my usual gaiety about me. We are so concerned in the reduction of Philipsburg, that I would not absent myself from the centre of news; and I am not a little mortified, my dear child, when I reflect how much you are left to the mercy of your imagination, which is the most tormenting company you can possibly have. Monsieur de Vauban has wrote to desire his Majesty to think of some person to make governor of this important conquest. We are in hopes that the place will be ours this day \*, as well for the pleasure of the surprize, as to do honour to the nativity of the Dauphin †. Enclosed are letters from your son, who has just quitted the trenches.

\* Philipsburg capitulated 29th October, and the garrison evacuated it the 1st of November.

† Born the 1st of November 1662.

I am,



I am greatly concerned for the Chevalier; the nasty gout teazes him sometimes in one hand, sometimes in another, accompanied with frequent pains, and sleepless nights. I do all in my power to make him easy, but my cares fall very short of those he has been accustomed to receive from your hands. We eat together in that same little room, it seems a cell destined for my residence. Coffee is quite in disgrace; the Chevalier thinks it heats his blood, and puts it in a ferment, and I, who, you know, always follow the lead, have likewise rejected it; rice-gruel supplies its place, and I keep coffee for the winter.

You do not say a word to me of your own health; I am terribly afraid of the night-airs of Grignan! Methinks they have already shewed you a scurvy trick; this was not the manner in which you ought to have been received by them; in short I tremble for your health; as for mine, it is wholly restored. I sleep much better than I did, I have no longer so bad a tongue, and am in all respects like other people. There are certain times and seasons, days and nights, that cannot easily be got over; but after all, tho' one cannot absolutely be comforted, nor recover what one has lost, yet we come round again by the help of a good constitution; this is exactly the case with me at present, and I find myself perfectly young again. I have a glimmering prospect of coming to see you, and that is my support.

I fancy the proroguing of the assembly of your states has quite disconcerted your measures; if so, you will be as I wished, out of the air of Grignan. You know I proposed your going  
to

to La Garde, to avoid that building distemper which lays every body up at Maintenon \*. I fancy that the coadjutor's building will go on pretty well, but that at Carcassonne will plague you all the summer. This is a cruel circumstance!

The Abbé Bigorre is, truly speaking, the best friend, and the most agreeable tenant, that can be wished; the Chevalier is highly satisfied with him. Mademoiselle de Meri meets with some company here, but her apartment causes us many an heart-aching †. What do you do with Paulina? How comes it you do not take her with you? I have given a description of her to Madame de la Fayette, who thinks it impossible for you not to be fond of her. She advises you to watch her turn of disposition, and to manage it agreeable to your own good judgment. She greatly approves of your holding frequent familiar conversations with her, to let her read to you, walk with you, hear you converse, and, in a word, to furnish her with every opportunity of exercising her genius and memory.

Madame de Lavardin is extremely happy that poor Jarzé is out of danger; his mother and wife are here, and think it some comfort under their misfortune, that he will now at least live with them quietly at home, or with his friends in Provence, or at Paris. I fancy we shall undertake no siege after that of Philippsburg; indeed, I am of your opinion, it is doing quite enough before

\* See note to page 120 of this volume.

† Mademoiselle de Meri occupied the apartment which was the Councils of Grignan's.

seventeen years of age \*. Sanzei is in arms as well as the rest. Adieu, my dearest. Believe not that we can ever cease respecting you, or accustom ourselves to the want of your enlivening presence in these mansions.

\* The Marquis of Grignan was born in November 1671.

**End of the EIGHTH VOLUME.**

